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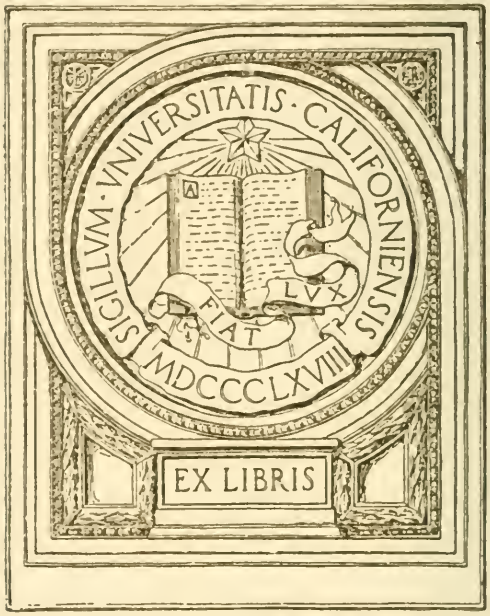

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THE TOR HILL.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," "GAIETIES AND GRAVITIES,"

&c. &c.

" Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Thro 'joy and thro' torments, thro' glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart;
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art."

Thos. Moore.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE TOR HILL.

CHAPTER I.

Alas! poor fond and simple dame!
When wedded love has lost its flame,
There 's no revival.
Your husband sighs for guilty fires,
Therefore it is that he admires
And loves your rival.

Leaving Dudley in the sanctuary of Westminster, where he safely arrived, and in which asylum he was for the present secured from fortune's malice, and the wiles of his tremendous persecutor, we must request our readers to accompany us back to The Tor Hill, in the hope

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that they are not altogether uninterested in the fate of some of its inmates. For the unfortunate Cecil Hungerford we would bespeak their liveliest compassion; and to him, therefore, we shall, in the first instance, revert. Notwithstanding the alarming conversation which Sir Lionel had maintained with Captain Basset and the doctor, respecting the disposal of their prisoner,—notwithstanding his refusal to afford any explanation or satisfaction to Lady Fitzmaurice, when we left her fainting on the floor, overcome by the passionate energy of her appeal, and her terror of the violence to which she believed the youth to be doomed, it was no part of Sir Lionel's plan to proceed to any desperate extremities against him. As a matter of mere policy, he would no more commit an unnecessary crime, than boggle at one which he conceived conducive to his interests. His conversation, therefore, with the doctor and the captain, had been one of those studies of human nature, as he termed them, in which, by maliciously playing upon the foibles and vices of his creatures, he not only learnt how far he might

rely upon their services, but, by drawing out their villainy, brought them more completely into his own power, without compromising himself; while his conduct towards Lady Fitzmaurice was only consonant to the habitual contempt with which he treated her; although, by turning against herself her oath never to betray her husband, he delighted to exhibit that crafty finesse and jesuitism which were inwoven with his more audacious qualities.

Through the instrumentality of the spies, by whom Dudley had been beleaguered from the moment of his arrival at The Tor House, his stolen interviews with his cousin had been discovered and reported to Sir Lionel, who immediately resolved to remove his prisoner into some place of effectual concealment, until he could get rid of his unwelcome visitant. Like most of the large mansions, which were in those days occasionally applied to military purposes, The Tor House was provided with a deep dungeon under one of the great towers, to whose dark and secret custody the unprincipled guardian ordered his ward to be for the present

committed. His arms having been previously pinioned, and his mouth gagged, to prevent resistance or discovery, Cecil was forcibly conveyed to his new prison; and it was in this plight that Lady Fitzmaurice, having accidentally gained a glimpse of him, had been impelled by sympathy and terror to intercede with such a vehement earnestness in his behalf. Sir Lionel, however, had no other object than to prevent the possibility of a communication between the cousins, by which he felt that his future projects might be materially endangered, if not altogether frustrated: this apprehension was no sooner allayed by the flight of Dudley, than Cecil was released from his miserable durance, and allowed to enjoy the same share of liberty as usual; that is to say, he was perpetually followed by one or more of the household myrmidons, who, under the name of his keepers, were instructed never to let him wander far from the premises, nor upon any account to lose sight of him, even for a single instant.

Dudley's apprehensions, as to the threatened

attack upon Glastonbury Abbey, proved not less unfounded than his belief that some immediate violence was meditated against his cousin. Sir Lionel, enraged at his visitant's escape, when he had so fair an opportunity for destroying him, as well as at the wound he had inflicted upon Captain Basset in the rencontre near the Mere, did, indeed, hastily order out his household troops (for such they might almost be termed) and parade them on the conspicuous summit of The Tor Hill; but it was more for the purpose of a muster, and of intimidating his neighbours by this public display of his power, than with any view to so desperate a measure, as an open assault upon the abbey. Other and safer schemes were in machination for the destruction of the Lord Abbot; schemes on the ultimate success of which he too implicitly relied to compromise them by any act of premature hostility.

To his personal encounter with Dudley, and the critical intervention by which the life of his intended victim was saved, Sir Lionel never made any subsequent allusion in the presence

of his daughter. Inconsiderate as she sometimes was, he knew too well the acuteness of her intellect, when she chose to exert it, to hope to blind her to the real nature of his conduct towards either Cecil or his cousin; while the firmness and decision of her character precluded all chance of his over-awing her, as he did others, by a frown or a command. Besides, he was, on many accounts, loth to have a single ground of difference, or a word of altercation with Beatrice, who formed the one solitary link by which it might be said that he was amicably connected with humanity. Supreme as was his general contempt for his fellow-creatures, and cordially as he entered into the warfare against them, he could not bear the idea of being totally cut off from friendly sympathy with mankind: misanthropical as he was, he wished not to be isolated even from the beings that he most affected to hate; he wanted something by which he might attach himself to the world. These lingering yearnings of our common nature were sufficiently gratified by the society of his daughter, the only being in The Tor House,

whom he did not either hate or despise. And yet it might be said that he was rather proud than fond of her; he was proud of her personal beauty, of her accomplishments, of her energetic character,—even of her splendid attire, and the hauteur of her carriage; for these were but so many reflections of himself and of his grandeur: but had she lost these attractions, had it been necessary to attest his affection by any self-sacrifice, Beatrice would have found the kind and cordial heart of her step-mother a surer reliance, than the uncertain attachment that originated in her father's pride.

For the first few days that followed Dudley's departure from The Tor House, Sir Lionel had been too busily employed in concerting schemes for his destruction, to bestow either his time or his thoughts upon Beatrice. We have seen how prompt and executive had been his measures for crushing his adversary, how quickly he had forged accusations against him, how readily he had suborned his perjured witnesses, how instantly he had dispatched some of his emissaries to London, to direct and expedite

the wreaking of vengeance. Possessed of the designs of his opponent, by the intelligence he had succeeded in procuring from the abbey with such an accountable celerity, he deemed it best to appear at court, rather than dread a legal inquiry into Cecil's mental competency, relying on the depositions of his oath-despising retainers for establishing the imbecility; and knowing, that if he could carry this point, his unfortunate ward would be permanently entangled in his toils beyond all possibility of extrication.

While he was thus so deeply absorbed in his guilty conspiracies, as scarcely to see any of the household but those immediately implicated in their execution, Beatrice had leisure to feel the sudden void created by the absence of Dudley. The grandeur of The Tor House, the magnificence she had delighted to affect, the conviction of her superiority, both in beauty and state, over all the surrounding damsels of quality and condition, no longer afforded her the same solace as formerly. These had been sufficient hitherto to atone for the crowded solitude

of an abode which, in the whole circle of its regular inmates, or occasional visitants, had never presented a single individual on whom her affections could repose. Dudley was the first who had awakened the dormant sensibilities of her bosom; his stay, indeed, had been short, but when she measured his visit by its effect upon her feelings, she seemed to consider him as her oldest and most cherished friend; and it is well known that the chronology of the heart disdains all ordinary modes of calculation.

Her step-mother had long given up the attempt to imbue her with her own homely and housewifely notions, to make her participate in the management of the household, to persuade her that happiness was most likely to be found in the practice of the domestic virtues, with a husband of congenial disposition, although he might move in a less elevated sphere than her own, and not exactly answer to her girlish notions of exterior comeliness. These anile and antiquated maxims had been completely exploded by Sir Lionel, who had taught his daughter to consider personal beauty as the

the only object worthy of admiration; rank, wealth, splendour, and distinction, as the sole legitimate pursuits. In the bosom of a young, ambitious, and high-spirited girl like Beatrice, such advice was sure to awaken a corresponding echo. Dudley united all that she had been instructed to consider valuable: he was handsome, affluent, nobly allied; and the counsels that her father had so carefully instilled into her, could not be forgotten in a moment, because he had hastily, and as she thought unjustifiably, drawn his sword upon the man, whom, by all his previous declarations, he ought to have considered a peculiarly eligible claimant for her hand. That Dudley had expressed any such intention she could not indeed aver; but that he would have become her suitor she had every reason to believe. Among lovers and mutual admirers, there is a much quicker medium of intelligence than speech; they have an intercommunion of thought that waits not the slow formalities of time and tongue: a single glance of the eyes may anticipate the future declaration of the lips, as the lightning forestalls the voice

of the clouds; and it was by means of these unerring, though silent, prophesiers, that she obtained a pre-conviction of his purpose, although he had not yet given it utterance.

Another circumstance, of which she was herself unconscious, contributed to strengthen her prepossession for Dudley. Shakspeare has said, that charity is twice blessed, a remark which he might have extended to beneficence of any sort: for, although we may not have previously loved those on whom we confer favours, it hardly ever happens that we do not love them afterwards. We are anxious to justify our good deeds by taking the objects of them to our hearts. No one ever saved a dog from drowning without becoming interested in his subsequent fate; and where we have been fortunate enough to preserve the life of a fellow-creature, it may be doubted which of the parties is generally inspired with the liveliest attachment towards the other. Certain it is, that Beatrice's satisfaction at the service she had rendered him, was at least as fervent and vivid as the gratitude of Dudley. It was, besides, peculiarly acceptable to the pride

of her character, that she should be the conferrer of such an important obligation: she had been accustomed to act the patroness and protector; and had the case been reversed, it is not impossible that she would have felt humiliated by owing a debt of gratitude too weighty to be repaid. From a different species of humiliation she was not now altogether absolved, for she felt her feminine dignity compromised when she became fully aware of her predilection for a man who had not distinctly avowed himself her admirer, and who, even if her presumptions of his attachment were well founded, would be doubtless precluded, by the fierce hostility of her father, from prosecuting his suit. It was possible, nay probable, that she should never see him again; thus situated, she felt the necessity of combating her passion almost as soon as she had made the discovery of its existence; and she had been too long indulged in all her caprices, too little accustomed to self-control, to make this effort without suffering, although her pride prevented her from betraying, by external manifestations, the struggle in her bosom.

There was another female in The Tor House, whose gentle and loving heart was wrung by a distress much more acute than that of Beatrice, for it arose from unrequited love, aggravated by the stings of jealousy and ill-treatment. This was the patient, the long-suffering, the never-complaining, the still-loving, although the slighted and supplanted Lady Fitzmaurice. Upon one occasion, when Sir Lionel was sitting on the terrace receiving the felicitations of the minions with whom he sometimes condescended to unbend, upon the success of some recent usurpation, he declared, in the pride of his heart, that he should never be satisfied until all that he beheld from that elevation had become his own property, and he had established a paramour in every Manor House. In the inflation of this imaginary aggrandisement, he summoned his band, and ordering them to strike up a royal flourish, sate for some time listening to the sound, drawing up his nostrils with complacency, and feeding his fancy with swelling anticipations of magnificence and revenge. To a certain extent, indeed, he had realised his presumptuous

dream. Nearly all that he saw in an opposite direction from the abbey acknowledged him for its owner, and a slight allusion has been already made to one guilty woman, whom he had installed in the house, formerly belonging to his victim Lord Dawbeney, and of which he had now obtained possession.

Of this connexion Lady Fitzmaurice was not ignorant, for he despised her too much to attempt its concealment; but the jealousy that the discovery kindled in her bosom was not that blind, furious, and frantic passion, which, converting love into hatred, hurries its wretched victim into deeds of revenge and desperation. Never having herself ceased to love Sir Lionel, she had never despaired of recovering his affections; nay, she had never abandoned the hope of weaning him from his ambitious and guilty projects, and rendering him worthy of that unalterable affection with which she still contemplated him. In the humbleness of her heart, she imagined that the most likely mode of effecting her purpose was by meekness, resignation, and an undeviating abstinence from complaint

or reproach. In these qualities she could at least eclipse her rival, and by these, therefore, she hoped in time to win back her truant husband; but there was a trait of characteristic simplicity in the belief that she might also compete with his mistress in her accomplishments, and lure back the wanderer by the same attractions that had led him astray. Upon the suspicious authority of one of her own maids, she had learnt that the woman in question was neither younger nor more comely than herself; and that her sole fascination consisted in her being able to sing and play upon the guitar, a much less common attainment in those days than it has since become.

Nothing but the devotedness of a sanguine and ineradicable affection could have prompted the resolution which she now adopted. She determined to learn the guitar for the purpose of affording that solace to her husband in his own house, the want of which she was willing to believe had been the sole cause of his alienation; although, as the reader is well aware, a band of minstrels formed part of his regular

establishment. In secret, and with incredible perseverance, did she prosecute a purpose rendered doubly irksome and laborious by its being so utterly repugnant to all her previous habits. Even in the difficulties of her undertaking she found a pleasure, taking it for granted that Sir Lionel would proportionately appreciate her exertions, and feeding upon the delightful hope of calling him back to her with voice and instrument, as surely as the skilful falconer reclaims a scattering hawk by his whoop and lure. Never, since her union with Sir Lionel, had she experienced so much happiness as while she was labouring under this delusion, which kept her in an enthusiasm of anticipation. Every day some small progress was made; and every night she laid her head upon her pillow in the soothing, the delicious persuasion, that she had accomplished something towards the recovery of her husband's affections. During this welcome infatuation her countenance discarded that expression of meek melancholy by which it was generally marked, and assumed a more cheerful mien; while her long absences

at her secret lessons, and the brisk mysteriousness of her manner when she returned, convinced Beatrice, the only one who took the trouble to note her demeanour, that she was wrapt up in some concealed project, although she was utterly unable to surmise its import.

At length the little train, by which she was to rekindle the torch of love, became perfected for explosion. By unintermitted practice she had enabled herself to extort two or three tunes from the instrument, and, enveloping it in a cloth, she unexpectedly made her appearance in her husband's private apartment. Luckily he was in a more gracious mood than ordinary, or she would probably have been chidden for the intrusion: as it was, he suffered her to seat herself beside him without observation, although he could not help noticing with a look of sneering wonderment, the unusual expression of triumph that sate upon her features. After mildly lamenting how little she had seen of him lately, since he was either perpetually closeted with his agents, or a wanderer from The Tor House in search of recreation, (such was the

only guarded allusion that she made to her rival,) she continued—"Well-a-day! Sir Lionel, my dear Sir Lionel, what would I not give to hear you sometimes sing to me as was your wont before we married. Sooth now, I would willingly wager a tester, that an you were good enough to try, you might carol me the pleasant ballad of King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid. Ah, Sir Lionel, do you remember—"

"Twit! madam," interrupted her husband, who hated all allusion to his singing, since she would not see that it was solely done with the interested motive of obtaining her money; "you may spare your speech, for I remember it all—the miller's cottage—the little garden—the pattering water—the blackbird in the maple tree—and the posies of eglantine and tansies. Gadamercy! I had a leaky memory else, for the same question is ever on your lips."

"Alas! because the scene is so deeply stamped upon my heart, and for ever floating before my eyes; but, by my holidame! I would mention it no more if I ween'd it might

anger you; nor will you now take it in dudgeon against me, I hope, if I have prepared for you here a little surprise, meant in good sooth to do you pleasure and contentment." She laid her hand, as she spoke, upon the concealed guitar, which she contemplated with a pleased and significant look.

"Psha!" cried Sir Lionel peevishly, "what gossip's mummery is this? This is not the first of April, and if it were you might better bestow your foolery upon the wenches at the spinning-wheel, for I am no chapman for such empty jibes."

"By my sooth, and on my soul, it is no jibe," said Lady Fitzmaurice, striking her hand upon the instrument, as if to give earnestness to her asseveration.

"Nay, then, prythee make an end of your foolery; if it be a puppet, keep it for Maid Marian and the Morris-dancers; if it be the haunch of a fat buck, away with it to the yeomen of the broach; and if a tod of fine wool, to the spindle with it, and let the wenches set their reels a-twirling."

"Truly, Sir Lionel, I have no such silly gear, but that which hath cost me more labour and pains than I would care to bestow for any earthly thing, unless it were to do solace to my husband. By my holidame, you shall not any longer need to roam for the tinkling of cunning wives, nor for the trolling of a song, for I have that in my hand which shall make The Tor House as pleasant a bower, as if it held a merry mistress with a throat more tuneful than the laverock's." So saying, she began to unfold the cloth with a mysterious smile, and seating herself in a stiff constrained attitude, after trying the strings, and hemming too or three times, she sang, in an untutored, though not unmelodious voice, some stanzas which had probably been selected rather for the moral they contained against roaming, than for their poetical merit.

"My mother's maids when they do sit and spin,
They sing sometimes a song of the field-mouse,
Who, for because her livelihood was thin,
Would needs go seek her townish sister's house."

Her awkward mode of handling the instrument, somewhat like the first attempt of a

school-girl; her occasional mistakes, after which she very deliberately began again; the plodding earnestness with which she marked the time with her feet, as a substitute for her defective ear; and the verses she had chosen for her *coup d'essai*, would have presented a ludicrous combination to a stranger; though the exhibition must have assumed a touching, and almost a pathetic, character to one who knew her affectionate motives, and the assiduous hope with which she had studied her lesson. Even Sir Lionel, whose conscious penetration soon gave him a clue to the whole plot, was not altogether unmoved by this near proof of her unalterable attachment, and by the humility which, instead of reproaching, thus endeavoured to reclaim him. Taunting and contemptuous as he usually was, he could not bear to sneer away the triumphant satisfaction at her achievement which irradiated her whole countenance; but still wishing to escape the second verse with which she threatened him, he laid his hand upon her arm, and pressing it gently, exclaimed—"Why, what a silly wretch thou art, and overfond! Hast

thou taken all this pains to do solace to thy husband? Gadamercy, Madge! my good and gentle Madge! he has not deserved it of thee." He again pressed her arm as he concluded, gazing upon her at the same time with a kind and not ungratified expression.

These were the first endearments, the first softened tones, the first friendly looks she had for a long time received; and imagining that she beheld in these the perfect success of her scheme, and the accomplishment of all her hopes, her affectionate heart instantly overflowed with a passion of joy. The guitar slipped from her unconscious grasp, her face became suffused with a flush of triumph, the tears gushed from her eyes, and clasping her hands together as she fell upon her knees, she exclaimed in a sobbing voice—"Oh, Sir Lionel! my husband! my dear husband; I would do this and ten times more; I would even kneel to you and be your humblest slave, if you would only love me as was once your wont, and not deem that a wanton can doat upon you with half so fond and faithful a

heart as your wife. Oh, if I could once win you from these perilous errors——"

"Twit! twit! good Madge," interrupted Sir Lionel, who already repented the momentary emotion he had betrayed, and the scene to which it had given rise—"up from your knees, I prythee, and no more of this, for it ever irks me to see a whimpering wife, and I must away, for I have urgent doings this morning that must be quickly sped."

"Well-a-day, Sir Lionel; was I crying? Troth, I knew it not. I will dry up my tears if they anger you; but may it please you, my dear husband, not to leave me till you have heard the rest, and the ballad of King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid, which it liked you once to sing yourself. By Holy Mary! it has cost me sore labour and many a weary hour to learn it."

"My present business brooks no delay, and this hearing must be, therefore, for another morning," said Sir Lionel, who had not the smallest intention of ever listening to more of her min-

strelsy, though he was anxious to escape from its present infliction without silencing her by any harsh or peremptory command. Lady Fitzmaurice was too much gratified by what she had achieved to oppose her husband's wishes, and taking up her guitar, which she pressed with transport to her heart, as if it had been the happy means of restoring to her all Sir Lionel's affection, she hurried, with a swelling bosom, to her own apartment, to weep with joy, and practise new lessons, and con over a fresh ballad.

She had accomplished wonders in exciting even an evanescent compunction in the mind of her husband, but she wanted tact and management to improve the trifling advantage she had gained. Considering him pledged to hear her some other morning, although he had only talked of it to get rid of her, she beleaguered him about the house, and popping unawares upon him with her guitar, intercepted his escape, and incontinently struck up—

"I read that once in Africa,
A princely wight did reign,
Who had to name Cophetua,
As poets they did feign."

But the momentary forbearance with which Sir Lionel had once listened to her was not destined to return. Irate at being thus waylaid and pestered, he quickly lost patience, and commanded her never again to offend him with her unwelcome strains, on pain of his heaviest displeasure. Ever obedient to his will, she threw aside her instrument, forgot presently the skill which it had cost her so much patient drudgery to acquire, and finding that she had accomplished nothing towards the recovery of his affections, while his visits to her rival were as frequent as ever, she sunk into a deeper dejection than before, although no syllable of complaint or reproach ever escaped her lips.

Thus affairs continued for some time, until she was aroused from her despondency by the intelligence, secretly conveyed to her by one of the maids who possessed her confidence, that a strange lady, whose appearance and carriage denoted a personage of rank and distinction, had lately twice visited the mansion under circumstances of great mystery. On her arrival she had enquired for Sir Lionel, with whom she

had been for some time closeted; on both occasions high and angry words had been heard to pass between them; and after her departure the whole of the Tor House had been in a state of agitation, Sir Lionel summoning his chief agents to long and close conferences, and exhibiting after these counsels (according to the authority of the present informant) an almost frantic fury in his demeanour, such as she had never witnessed before. Lady Fitzmaurice's first apprehensions on her own account, that it was some new rival, were no sooner dissipated by this statement of the mutual rage with which the parties met and separated, than the relation, marvellous and incomprehensible as it was, filled her with terrors for her husband's safety. That he who almost openly defied heaven and earth, and was upon all occasions of common danger, fierce and courageous as the lion, should be thus shaken to the very foundations of his soul by a female, indicated some strange, imminent, and terrible peril. She knew that his audacious and illegal proceedings were fraught with most awful jeopardy, that his unholy alliances, if they

were indeed what she suspected, involved a tremendous, an unutterable responsibility; but how this unknown female should draw down upon his head the doom to which he was exposed, she could not possibly conjecture; and the keenest curiosity being thus added to the most lively alarm for her husband's safety, she requested her informant to apprize her when the mysterious being in question should next make her appearance.

Not many days elapsed before she received an intimation to this effect, and placing herself in a situation, near the waiting-room into which the visitant was to be ushered, where she could see without being seen, Lady Fitzmaurice was enabled to observe her at leisure before she was summoned to Sir Lionel's apartment. The figure upon whom her eyes were thus bent, with a most eager and scrutinizing curiosity, was of a commanding stature, and had evidently passed the middle age. There is a sort of physical, bodily aristocracy of appearance, produced by continued intermarriages among families of distinction, all following the same modes and habits,

and enjoying the same luxuries of artificial life, which, in process of time, stamps its own character of nobility, and enables you to distinguish its members with as much certainty as you would separate a race-horse at the first glimpse from a hackney of inferior race. Such was the character indelibly impressed upon every lineament of the stranger. Her high Roman nose, so thin as to be almost transparent, her silky hair, the proud expression of her eyes, the delicacy of her colourless skin, the white and elegantly shaped hand with its long and arched nails, her graceful and yet somewhat disdainful carriage, all betrayed the woman of rank, who was not unconscious of the privileges of her birth; while her general physiognomy gave reason to suspect that, if once offended, she would be fierce and implacable in her revenge.

Lady Fitzmaurice stood too much in awe of her husband to venture near his apartment, to which the unknown female was now ushered; but the greater curiosity or courage of her maid impelling her to approach the door, she returned

with a look of alarm, declaring, that although she could not distinguish the subject of their discourse, she was sure something terrible was going on, from the fierce and passionate tones of their voices; adding, that she must be a bold and formidable creature thus desperately to beard Sir Lionel in his own house, and wag her tongue as angrily and as loudly as the master of the mansion. Whatever was the nature of her visit, it was not of long continuance; she went away, and Sir Lionel's appearance after her departure sufficiently attested the alarming nature of their colloquy. Consternation and wrath distorted his features, seldom as they exhibited any other expression than that of a contemptuous sneer; the lawyer, who had by this time returned from London, Captain Basset, and the doctor, were instantly summoned to his private chamber, and the whole party sate in close deliberation until an unusually late hour of the night. Nothing, however, transpired, and Lady Fitzmaurice, who had already so heavy a weight of anxiety to sustain,

was for some time tormented by the additional misgivings as to her husband's safety, which this mysterious occurrence could not fail to awaken in a heart so faithful and so apprehensive as her's.

CHAPTER II.

When signs and horrible portents,
Convulse the darkened elements,
And fear despotic
Seizes the soul,—the mental world,
Into the same confusion hurl'd,
Becomes chaotic.

Appalled and infuriated as he was by the apparition of this new visitant, Sir Lionel prepared himself to encounter his other assailants, and to vindicate his usurpations, with the calmness, sagacity, and craft which had hitherto borne him triumphantly through every danger. His spirit always rose with the urgency of the peril, his heart swelled with its own collected venom, as well as with the anticipation of victory, whenever he was about to make or to repel an attack; and it was only in the solitary

instance, to which we have just alluded, that he had ever suffered himself to be o'ermastered by dismay and rage. Dudley's application to the Lord Keeper having driven him to the dangerous expedient of appearing to court an inquiry into the mental competency of his ward, he addressed all his energies, and arranged his subtlest contrivances, to meet the coming contingency with a certainty of success. Indeed, he rejoiced at the occurrence, for as the period drew nearer when Cecil's minority would expire, he felt the necessity of effectually silencing any claims to the possession of his estates, by a legal declaration of his imbecility; while, by procuring himself to be nominated the custodian of his person, he hoped to perpetuate this imputation, and thus prevent his ever marrying or alienating the large domains of the family. To their management Sir Lionel was entitled, as the next presumptive heir under the will of Sir Giles Hungerford; a point, however, which he considered of much less consequence than the nine others involved in his having present possession of the property.

Nor were the impediments in the way of his undertaking by any means so insurmountable as they might at first sight appear. Essentially different as the two objects are, we know that it is sometimes extremely difficult, when contemplating the line of the horizon, to separate the sea from the sky; and it is occasionally not less impracticable to distinguish the delicate boundary that divides sanity from imbecility, although so utterly dissimilar in their nature. Cecil's eccentricities of thought and action, his total ignorance even in many of the simplest elements of knowledge, his aversion from all society, his strange hankering for burying himself in the Cave of Wokey, and his general devotedness to solitude and his dog, might well be deemed evidences of an unsound mind, by those who knew not the scandalous neglect, and the diabolical practices by which they had been produced, or who were incompetent to detect that his intellect was bright and clear as the sun, although it might be momentarily dimmed by passing mists and exhalations. Upon his ignorance, above all, Sir Lionel built his firmest

hopes of success, especially as the ex-tutor was at hand to establish his inability to acquire the common rudiments of language and learning. But resolving to leave nothing to hazard, and to have an excess rather than a deficiency of proof in a matter of such vital importance, he concocted an organized system of perjury, fixing upon the youth such general incoherency of speech, such occasional wildness, and even dangerous and outrageous violence in his fits of idiocy or delirium, that he hoped not only to have him declared incompetent, but to procure a warrant for his confinement, as one whose liberty was not consistent with the safety of the king's subjects. This point he was peculiarly anxious to carry, because he knew that nothing was more likely to produce real alienation of mind, than a rigid imprisonment under the false imputation of it.

Wary, however, and provident in every thing, he was prepared to guard against the effect that might be produced in the minds of the commissioners by Cecil's interesting appearance, his gentleness, his amiability, his occasional self-posses-

sion, and the perfect propriety and even eloquence with which he could discourse upon certain subjects. As he might be in one of his happiest and calmest moods on the day of examination, he resolved to nullify the impression it might make, by admitting that he was occasionally visited by lucid intervals, in which, with the cunning peculiar to such unhappy sufferers, he might deceive the shrewdest and most practised observer, who had not been enabled, by a longer acquaintance, to see him in his moments of drivelling dementation, or his fits of fury. By these artifices, and by the circumstantial evidence of his unsound mind, which a whole host of suborned witnesses were ready to adduce, he confidently relied on overcoming any favourable feeling that his appearance might awaken, and on procuring a public legal declaration of his insanity.

The proceedings preparatory to his examination by the commissioners, were now rapidly advancing. Notwithstanding the incredible multiplicity of his engagements, ecclesiastical and legal, civil and political, such was the

energetic activity of the Lord Cardinal's mind, that he suffered nothing within his cognisance to bring a reproach upon the law by the tardiness of its progress. Taking a peculiar interest in the alleged maltreatment of Cecil, and eager to tear down to the earth so audacious a transgressor and usurper as Sir Lionel had been described, he pushed forward the cause, and himself nominated the commissioners who were to make the investigation. In the presumption that more accurate details could be obtained upon the spot, he directed them to proceed into Somersetshire, and cautioning them to depend more upon the personal examination of the asserted lunatic, than upon the depositions of others, however direct and plausible, he dismissed them to the strict execution of their trust.

Some time beforehand Sir Lionel received an official notification, containing the names of the commissioners and physicians, and fixing the day when they would present themselves at the Tor House, for the purposes mentioned in the document; and he accordingly lost no time in

making such preparations as might forward his own nefarious views. In order to produce a general impression that his ward suffered no more restraint than was necessary, he allowed him more than his usual liberty, himself accompanying him twice to the town of Glastonbury, that he might see the helmet and the inscription set up to the memory of his father in the church, and permitting him to ramble more freely in the neighbourhood, although never unaccompanied by his keepers, who answered the double purpose of preventing his escape, and diffusing a more general belief in his inability to take care of himself. Fearful that Cecil might assist in his own defence, divulge the neglect and cruel treatment he had experienced, or make some pathetic appeal to his judges if he were aware of the meditated inquiry, he took care that not the smallest intimation of the kind should reach him; while, as the time drew near, he began to renew those execrable practices which had formerly bewildered and unhinged his mind, in the hope that they might again produce the same result.

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On the night before the day fixed for his examination, these diabolical inflictions assumed their most appalling array. His sleep was disturbed by a crash of hideous sounds, which suddenly falling upon that exquisite sense of hearing to which we have elsewhere alluded, seemed to torture and split asunder the innermost recesses of his ear; and, when thus aroused by noises that made him thrill with actual agony, horrific spectral apparitions gleamed athwart the room, or approached his bed, in every variety of ghastly appearance or attitude of menace, that could inspire disgust and terror. So acute were the sufferings from his ear, that they steeled him in some degree against the frightful objects that sought to scare his eye; and he was besides no longer of an age to be so easily overcome as formerly. Determined to ascertain whether these presentments were palpable to touch, he jumped from his bed with a desperate resolution, and attempted to grasp the figure before him; but it was one of those phantasmagoric shadows with which it was impossible to grapple, and he returned to his

couch baffled, bewildered, and aghast. His faithful dog, Snowdrop, however, who invariably slept in his apartment, was very near effecting a discovery of the miscreant who was perpetrating these villanous deceptions. Terrified at such unaccustomed sounds and sights, the poor animal had leapt to its master for protection, and slinking and crouching down, with its head buried in his bosom, lay trembling all over, stealing occasional glances at the objects of its dismay, by rolling its eye-balls backwards without moving its body. Thus it continued for some minutes, until one of these intangible assailants approached close to the bed, and appeared to brandish an uplifted dagger, when the faithful creature, as if eager to protect him, to whom it had, in the first instance, crept for protection, burst from arms, and flew fiercely at the figure. Though foiled in its immediate object, the quick senses of the animal directed it to the concealed worker of all this devilish machinery, who was fain to effect a rapid escape through the sliding pannel by which he had entered, or he would probably have left ocular

proof upon Snowdrop's jaws, that actual flesh and blood had mingled in the dance of the spectres.

Exhausted from the want of sleep, and confounded in all his apprehensions, Cecil arose at an early hour on the morning of the day fixed for his examination, and wandered forth into the fields, hoping that the calm, silent, tranquillising scenery of the surrounding meads, and the balmy influences of nature, would prove efficient, as they had on all former occasions, in soothing the perturbation of his mind. It is needless to state, that his keepers accompanied, or rather followed him,—for such was their wont,—with strict orders to conduct him back in time for the meeting, which was fixed for two o'clock in the afternoon. Nor was Sir Lionel at all sorry to have him out of the way until he was wanted, for he could depend upon the fellows who were with him, while he was not without suspicions that some of his other retainers had been tampered with by Dudley's agents, as he knew that attempts had been made to get a letter secretly conveyed to his ward.

A deep dejection weighed heavily upon Cecil's mind as he strayed musing amid the fields; a languor produced by the deprivation of sleep oppressed his body, while his faculties were confounded by the occurrences of the night. Startling and astounding as were the sounds and sights with which he had been tormented, he would have been inclined to deem them the creations of his own distempered brain, and to receive them as corroborations of his imputed insanity, had they not as obviously impressed the senses of his dog as his own. Why he should be exposed to such persecutions he could not possibly conceive; with what motive they should be inflicted, if they were the work of some human enemy, it puzzled him to apprehend; how he had merited them, if they fell upon him as the judgments of an offended Deity, no retrospection of his past conduct enabled him to conjecture. This bewilderment of his thought he had hoped to dissipate by contemplating the placid beauties of the country, in whose mind-healing influences he never failed to find consolation. For this purpose,

however, the morning was singularly unpropitious. A hazy mist hung over the whole face of nature like a veil, completely shrouding distant objects from view, and imparting dim, fantastic, and undefined forms to those that were nearer. Not a breath of air arose to move or disperse this universal vapour, and the stifling closeness of the atmosphere seemed to increase as he advanced. "Alas!" exclaimed Cecil to himself, "I expected to sympathize with nature, and soothly so I do, for everything around me is enveloped in gloom and mystery. All is darkness and doubt: the world itself, with all its beautiful pageantry, is an inscrutable enigma; my own fate is equally inexplicable. I know nothing, but that while all other created things seem to find solace and society in their kind, I alone am isolated and wretched; visited with ear-maddening clangours and spectral ghastliness by night, and cut off from all social comfort and consolation by day. My void and yearning heart sought communion with female loveliness, but I am spurned away as an idiot and a boy; for a moment I fancied I had

found a friend in my cousin, but he is torn from me as soon as he expresses compassion for my fate, and I am plunged into a dungeon for having excited his sympathy. All the world despises me—I have no parent, no companion, no friend! Forgive me, my poor Snowdrop," he continued, taking up his dog, and pressing him fondly to his bosom; "you are my companion and my friend, and I ought not thus to repine, for I could not have found one more faithful in the whole circle of my fellow-creatures!"

Putting down his dog, who instantly began to bound and bark around him, in a delirium of joy at the caresses he had received, he walked on for some time, lost in mournful reveries, until his attention was aroused by the strange and appalling appearance of the atmosphere. Instead of an increased light as the day advanced towards its meridian, it might rather have been thought that night was coming on, for the darkness rapidly deepened, and the mist, which continued undiminished, assumed a horrid, ominous, and lurid hue, as if universal nature stood

aghast, in the approaching crisis of some dreadful convulsion. This awful supposition was favoured by other, and less equivocal manifestations. He heard the quick flapping of wings overhead, and the voices of the birds as they hurried through the air screaming aloud with terror: the cattle were hoarsely bellowing in the fields, and he caught the noise of their resounding hoofs, as some frightened, though undistinguishable herd, rattled furiously over the stones of an adjacent road. Thunderstorms he had witnessed in all their variety, but these were not the accompaniments by which they were usually distinguished; a peculiar and unnatural gloom threw a frowning horror over the world, which continued to deepen as mid-day drew on; the very air hung moist and motionless, as if panic-stricken; Cecil himself, listening to cries of dismay from birds and animals which he could not see, environed by a portentous obscurity for which he was utterly unable to account, and affected by the alarm and agitation of his dog, who slunk trembling to his feet, stood transfixed and overawed, uncertain

whether some tremendous earthquake were about to yawn beneath his feet, or whether the final dissolution of all things might not be at hand.

"Is it not enough?" he at length whispered, for it seemed as if even the sound of his own voice were irreverent, when nature herself stood silent and breathless—"is it not enough that I am pursued by the terrors of the night, but must I be also haunted by no less dreadful visions in the day, if this indeed be day, when morning seems to be closing its eyes for ever, and light to have chosen the earth for its death-bed. Why, oh why am I thus pursued with hate and horror? Life is but a spark that divides the darkness of the antenatal and posthumous infinities: but evanescent as it is, oh, that mine might more quickly become extinct! Oh, that I had the wings which I hear hurrying through the air, that I might flee away into the darkness, and be at rest! Oh, that I might be mingled with the rushing waters whose course I cannot see, and be borne rapidly along into the ocean of eternity! Oh,

that I might return into the elements from which I was compounded, and lose that fatal consciousness which only enables organized matter to endure misery! Oh, ye twinkling flowers! your eyes may well be bright, for ye know not woe! If ye bow down your heads before the storms of heaven, or if ye are crushed beneath the foot of man, ye do but breathe forth sweeter incense; and your unconscious death is but a conversion into fragrant air, that so ye may be wafted to the skies. Oh, ye clouds! ye are happy, for even when ye weep, your tears are drops of gladness to the world, and when ye blush, it is not with guilt, but with joy at the sight of the sun: ye float between heaven and earth, but ye fear not the wrath of the one, nor the cruelty and injustice of the other. I look around me, and I see nothing so miserable as the solitary and degraded Cecil Hungerford."

Sitting himself down upon a large craggy stone, and taking his crouching dog into his lap, he suffered his crossed hands to repose upon the animal's back, while he indulged his

melancholy thoughts, or occasionally looked out upon the dark, scowling, and ghastly face of nature. After a time it appeared to him that the gloom diminished; that the mist was less dense and lurid; and sympathizing with what he surmised to be the marks of returning confidence, he continued his soliloquy in a less desponding mood——"Ungrateful that I am; why should I tremble or repine? Even if the day of doom were come, what have I to fear? The beautiful pageant of the world, with all the glories by which it is emblazoned, do they not declare to us that God is good as well as great? does he not bid the earth for ever delight as well as feed her children, sending the seasons in their due succession to bring forth the corn; covering the fields with flowers; filling the air with fragrance, and making it musical with the voice of birds? Does he not stretch forth his arm to fan the hot earth with breezes, or temper the fervour of the summer-sun by clouds? And so shall it still be when this mysterious darkness and desolation shall have passed away,—for the Creator will not forget his

creation; nor will he abandon his creatures, even so humble and miserable a one as myself. This horrible portent is not an evidence, as my misgiving heart suggested, of his wrath against myself. Oh, no, no, no! man may persecute and oppress me, the world may frown upon me, I may be branded as an idiot and an outcast, but I shall not be deserted by the Deity."

A sickly and ambiguous light now gleamed through the mist, just sufficient to show the position of the sun in the heavens, when Cecil, falling upon his knees in the enthusiasm of renovated hope, clasping his hands together, and casting up his eyes towards the glimmering sky, exclaimed—"Oh, glorious and eternal sun! oh, thou central eye of God! dimmed as thou art for the moment, thou wilt not refuse to look down upon me and cheer me with thy rays. What are the frowns of the world, while thou canst send me down smiles from heaven? Thou wilt not refuse to see me when I kneel before thee;—thou wilt not draw down thine eye-lid in anger when I humbly——"

He broke off with an abrupt horror, for a

violent gust of wind suddenly springing up, dispersed the mist, and discovered to him the object which he had just addressed as the central eye of God, with its lid drawn down! So at least it appeared to his disturbed and terrified perceptions. It was the great solar eclipse. Of these celestial phænomena, in the ignorance in which he had been purposely left, he knew nothing; and even if he had, it is probable that the agitated state of his mind, and the critical coincidence between the appearance of the portent and his speech, would have induced him to put the same interpretation upon it as he now did. Conceiving it to be a prodigy from heaven expressly addressed to himself—that it was a distinct answer of wrath to his appealing prayer—that he was marked for reprobation like a second Cain, his overwrought feelings and faculties became utterly confounded; and after having gazed upon the phænomenon for a few seconds, with unutterable horror and agony, he was smitten with a sudden phrensy.

His long hair streaming upon the wind, which had now completely dissipated the mist,—utter-

ing loud shrieks, or rather yells, of terror, and followed by his frightened dog, who sent forth the most wailful and discordant howls, Cecil burst away, with a maniac speed, towards the Mendip hills; presenting an apparition, which, in conjunction with the lowering and portentous appearance of the eclipsed scenery through which he moved, the wild terror of the bellowing herds, and the dismal howling of the dog as he rushed after his master, might have appalled the heart of the stoutest spectator. His keepers, who might now be said to fill no unnecessary office, followed him; but the utmost speed of the pursuers was so inferior to the fleetness of the maddened fugitive, that, far from any chance of overtaking him, they could not always manage to keep him in sight. For some time, indeed, his shrieks, which still made the air terrible with their fearful and piercing shrillness, betrayed his course; but these became at length inaudible; and though they caught occasional glimpses of him, as he gained the Mendip hills, scudding along the extreme edge of precipices, or vaulting from crag to crag, with a frantic and

convulsive energy, they at length lost sight of him altogether, and concluded that he had dashed himself to pieces down some of the deep ravines that intersect that rocky range.

Remembering, however, the strict injunctions they had received, never to lose sight of him, and well aware that Sir Lionel was not to be disobeyed with impunity, they proceeded in search of him, taking the direction of Wokey Hole, which they knew to be his favourite haunt. For some time they hurried about, amid the glens and chasms, the turfy valleys, craggy abysses, or tufted dells, which variegate the picturesque region over which they passed, without discovering the object of their quest. They would not have been more successful in the cave of Wokey, or amid the Chedder cliffs, another of his chosen retreats, and in all probability would have been compelled to return without him, had they not fortunately encountered Snowdrop, or, rather, had not the dog sought them out for the express purpose of becoming their guide. To those who have not sufficiently studied the canine physiognomy to know the great

variety and truth of expression of which it is susceptible, it may appear preposterous to state that the keepers instantly read in Snowdrop's looks that some catastrophe had happened to his master, and that he came to conduct them to the spot where it had occurred. Long experience of his sagacity and attachment to Cecil had made them close observers of his demeanour; and immediately conjecturing his intelligence and his purpose, from his looks, moans, and gestures, they accepted him for their conductor. When he saw that his purpose was understood, he increased his speed, as if aware that quick aid was required, occasionally looking impatiently back, when he had outstripped them, as if to reproach their tardiness.

Through moor, fell, and waste, over naked heights and tangled briary bottoms, did he lead them on, till they reached a narrow dingle, adown whose grassy side a runnel from the adjoining hill, perpetually though silently stealing, had formed a large shallow pond in the hollow, dotted here and there with flags and water-lillies. On the sloping margin, which

the little rill kept ever fresh and verdant, Cecil, exhausted by terror and the fatigue of his long and rapid flight, had sunk in a fit of fainting; and there he still lay extended, fairer than any of the flowers that bloomed beside him, fairer than Hylas, Adonis, or Hyacinthus, whom not even the sudden and tragical nature of their death could rob of their beauty. The keepers, as they approached, entertained not a doubt that he had expired; for he noticed not his favourite dog, who, in his joy at having thus brought him assistance, barked with a loud and eager delight, which must have awakened him, had he been only sleeping. He remained, however, utterly motionless; although, as his long light hair was borne upwards with the breeze, its shadows danced upon the water beside which he lay, as if in playful mockery of death. Snowdrop himself seemed at last to lose all hope; for after having again barked close to his ear, and repeatedly licked his face, without effect, he lifted up his throat, and sent forth a long, wailful, and despairing howl, that thrilled even to the bosoms and hearts of the

keepers, unaccustomed as they were to exhibit any signs of sensibility.

One of them having found, by placing his hand upon Cecil, that he was still warm, raised him gently up, and the other plentifully besprinkling his face with water, he at length slowly recovered animation, and again opened his eyes, when the faithful Snowdrop leaped into his lap, laid his head upon his bosom, and continued wagging his tail, and caressing him with every expression of an intense though silent joy. Cecil, however, noticed him not; he uttered not a syllable; his vacant eyes saw nothing, and he was evidently in a state of stupor, which puzzled the keepers how to act, or by what means to get him back to The Tor House, for which their anxiety was every moment increasing. In this emergency, one of them ran up the hill with the intention of seeking assistance, should there be any peasant's hut or chance-wanderers in the immediate vicinity. He had not roamed far, when he fortunately stumbled upon some lead-miners, who were easily induced, by the promise of a handsome remuneration, to lend

him one of their light vehicles for transporting ore, to which an active horse was presently harnessed; and a guide being selected who was well acquainted with the country, they returned to the spot where Cecil had been left. Upon this humble carriage, with Snowdrop in his lap, although he was unconscious of his presence, was he borne back to The Tor House, which the guide's knowledge of the hills and road enabled them to reach, with much more expedition, than the terrified keepers had apprehended.

In the first ebullition of his wrath at Cecil's protracted absence, Sir Lionel had vowed vengeance against his attendants, who had received strict injunctions to bring him back at a fixed hour. Traitors are ever suspicious of treachery; and, as the morning advanced without their return, he took it for granted that they had been bribed by Dudley's agents, and had seized this opportunity of assisting his ward to escape. After having made such ample and complete arrangements for securing a favourable issue to the examination, it stung him to the quick that he should be thus over-reached in the very crisis

of his success; and he dispatched servants in all directions to gather tidings of the fugitives; but the state of the atmosphere, precluding the possibility of any distant view, had occasioned them to return unsuccessful.

As the time slipped away, his exasperation became aggravated into a fury, which had reached its height, when it was suddenly allayed by the welcome intelligence that the whole party had at length made their appearance. From the keepers he could not obtain any distinct explanation, as to the cause of Cecil's sudden phrenzy; nor was he, indeed, very solicitous about the matter; it was sufficient to him to mark that his faculties had not yet returned; for he saw, in this most opportune and fortunate occurrence, a much more effectual means of carrying his point with the commissioners, than by all the perjured evidence that he had taken so much pains to suborn.

Nature had now resumed her ordinary appearances; and the astounded sun-gazers, who had studded the surface of the earth with upturned eyes, had resumed their customary em-

ployments and pursuits. The great eclipse had passed away, unaccompanied by any of those portentous calamities and convulsions, which the egregious wizards of London had so confidently prognosticated; and the commissioners arriving at The Tor House at two o'clock in the afternoon, conformably to their appointment, were ushered into the hall of justice, to open the business of the examination. Much as he relied upon the effect of Cecil's personal appearance in his present state, Sir Lionel determined to bring forward all the evidence that had been prepared: the parties were accordingly examined in succession, and their depositions committed to paper, a process which occupied some time. So numerous were they, and so full, so directly confirmatory of Cecil's insanity, by the most circumstantial statements, that the major part of the commissioners were already satisfied of the fact; although the others, knowing the character and practices of the guardian, and the facility with which perjured witnesses might be procured, declared that every thing would depend upon the appearance of the ward himself,

whom they now demanded to be produced. He was accordingly let in, his wild and haggard looks sufficiently attesting the mental convulsion by which he had been recently shattered, although at the present moment he appeared to have sunk into an unconscious stupor. Thus he for some time remained, taking no notice of the questions that were put to him, until his eye resting upon the horrid insignia of the justice-room, which we have formerly described, he seemed to consider that he was brought there as a criminal, and to connect his present situation with the harrowing prodigy of the morning. In this belief he suddenly hid his face, and, uttering a cry of misery, exclaimed, in shuddering accents—"Oh, hide me! hide me! I am guilty: God shuts his eye upon me! I am a doomed and accursed castaway—a Cain on whom Heaven has set its brand! Oh, be merciful, and kill me quickly; for my brain is on fire, and my heart is withered with anguish." These and similar exclamations of terror and bewilderment were all that could be elicited by the physicians and commissioners, in answer to

the most soothing speeches and inquiries; and as his distress and aberration of mind seemed to be increased by a continuance in the apartment, they compassionately ordered him to be withdrawn.

Even the most sceptical and suspicious were now convinced; whatever they might have thought of the witnesses, this evidence was conclusive; and they accordingly drew up a report, in which they unanimously declared the minor to be a lunatic, recommending the continuance of his guardian as his custodian, (for the depositions bore abundant testimony to his humanity and fitness for the office,) and submitting the propriety of his being armed with a full power to imprison his ward, whenever he should deem it advisable, either for the safety of the youth himself, or of the king's subjects. This report, emanating from parties whose characters were above all suspicion, was confirmed by the lord keeper, who imagined that the Abbot of Glastonbury had been imposed upon, and that Dudley was probably actuated by interested motives or personal host

tility. And thus had the efforts made for Cecil's extrication only served to rivet the chains with which his oppressor had bound him; to fix upon him the legal imputation of insanity; and to enable the crafty and formidable Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice to triumph over all his enemies.

CHAPTER III.

Lady! those charms of stately mien,
In rural shades, on village green,
But waste their powers:
Your Queen invites;—a nobler place
Your presence claims,—then come and grace
Our courtly bowers.

The King of the Hill, more than ever entitled to that proud appellation since his recent victory had confirmed him in the possession of all his usurped power and property, was thus left at leisure to perfect his schemes of vengeance and aggrandisement. Upon Dudley, now that he had driven him to sanctuary, he could not immediately inflict any further outrage, though he took care to keep such charges hanging over his head, as would effectually deter him from quitting the asylum he had chosen: against the

character and even the life of his ancient enemy, the Lord Abbot of Glastonbury, he was daily maturing a conspiracy of the blackest and most treacherous character. Cecil Hungerford, after his slow recovery from the late alarming burst of phrensy, had sunk into a deeper dejection and despondency than ever; so that Sir Lionel, who saw himself fortified, both by legal sanction and by Dudley's self-imposed imprisonment, against any new claims on behalf of the poor lunatic, as he now affected to call him, almost ceased to trouble his head about him, leaving him to the good or bad treatment of his keepers, with the most peremptory orders, however, that they should never lose sight of him. Thus a considerable time passed away without any material alteration at The Tor House, whose lord and master was daily held in increased detestation by all the virtuous and the good, although their long experience of his power and fiend-like subtlety, and the general conviction, that by some tremendous soul-devoting bond he had secured infernal abettors of his villainy, deterred even the stoutest of heart from venturing

into the lists with so ruthless and invincible an opponent.

An event was now in active progress of so paramount, so stupendous an importance, that it absorbed the undivided attention of Europe. The Reformation had begun! The whole moral world of thought, which had for so many ages been chained down in silent inertness by the fetters of superstition and ignorance, was now heaving and writhing with the throes of that mighty convulsion, by which it was soon to burst asunder its adamantine shackles, to shake off and topple down to the ground the accumulated bigotries, abuses, prejudices, and scarlet abominations that had so long oppressed and defiled it, and to stand erect, that it might contemplate heaven in the majesty of freedom, purity, and truth. "Germany first broke the spell of misbegotten fear, and gave the watch-word; but England joined the shout, and echoed it back with her island voice, from her thousand cliffs and craggy shores, in a larger and a louder strain. With that cry the Genius of Great Britain rose, and threw down the

gauntlet to the nations."* From the lust, cupidity, and corruption—from the vices and depravities of Henry VIII. and his Court,—perhaps the most degraded specimens of humanity that modern times had offered,—from these poisonous elements did Heaven, by a beautiful moral alchemy that claims our admiration not less than our gratitude, extract that inestimable elixir of reformed Christianity, which effected more in a few years towards ennobling and advancing the human race, than all that had been accomplished since the birth of Christ.

So shrewd and ambitious a character as Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, was not likely to be slow in perceiving the advantages which his own numerous projects might derive from this state of things, nor to be scrupulous in availing himself of them. Cardinal Wolsey, whatever pride and rapacity may attach to his name as a prelate, was certainly the most zealous and able minister that Henry ever possessed, and has

* Hazlitt's "Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth," p. 15.

never been sufficiently praised for the beneficial control that he seems to have exercised over the vicious passions of his master. During his administration, the King's conduct had been comparatively unobjectionable; but he was now dead, and the monarch began to exhibit that headstrong tyranny, which the want of all subsequent check and restraint soon suffered to ripen into an ungovernable indulgence in the most monstrous cruelties and enormities. Having secretly determined upon the suppression of the monasteries, he was at this moment collecting evidence for the justification of the measure, and listening to alleged abuses, with a predisposition to believe every thing that might accelerate the dissolution, and expedite the grand object of his rapacity—the plunder of the religious establishments. Here was a fine opening for Sir Lionel (who foresaw the royal intentions) to advance himself, and, at the same time, ruin his most hated enemy, the Abbot of Glastonbury, by endeavouring to fix upon him such imputations as might for ever sully a name, which had been hitherto con-

nected with all that was worthy of reverence for sanctity, learning, and virtue. Could he become instrumental in the destruction of the Abbey, he doubted not that he should be allowed to participate in its plunder; and thus actuated by the double motives of cupidity and revenge, he began to organize his plots, cabals, and perjuries; and made from time to time such secret communications to the government as were deemed not less important than acceptable.

To none were they more welcome than to the King himself, who bore a special grudge against the abbot, not only on account of the respect which his hitherto unsullied character, and the unimpeachable conduct of his monks, were calculated to extend over all other institutions of the same nature, but on account of certain conscientious scruples entertained by him, which the imperious monarch chose to stigmatize as evidences of contumacy and disaffection. Henry was now making one of his progresses in the West of England with his queen, Anna Boleyn, when, finding that his route was bring-

ing him into the vicinity of Glastonbury, he resolved in a sudden fit of caprice, to pay a visit to The Tor House, not so much out of respect to Sir Lionel, although he had a complacent recollection of him as a distinguished jouster at tilt and tournament, and was well pleased with his recent communications, as for the purpose of collecting further information, and of viewing, without visiting, the noble abbey, whose architectural beauties had been so universally eulogized. To his impetuous temperament the whim of the moment afforded no gratification unless it could be instantly executed, and he would have immediately turned his horse's head in the direction of Glastonbury, but that he found his numerous train and cavalcade could not possibly reach it before nightfall. As it was, he contented himself with dispatching his favourite Sir Anthony Denny, to announce his intention of honouring The Tor House with a visit on the following morning, a commission which a fleet gelding enabled him to execute in half the time that would have been required by the royal party, accompanied

as it was by a troop of female attendants, and heavily-laden horses.

Sir Lionel was startled by the unexpected intelligence, and knowing his own numerous mal-practices, and the King's summary method of dispatching offenders, he was vehemently disposed to put a sinister construction upon the occurrence, until re-assured by Sir Anthony, who declared that he had heard his royal master make most gracious mention of him on the day before, and recall with much complacency the great tilting-match, at which, in his earlier life, he had honoured Sir Lionel with his own special notice, and dubbed him his champion. Sir Anthony was further instructed to state that no refreshments need be provided, for which, indeed, the shortness of the notice hardly afforded an opportunity, as it was the King's intention only to remain for an hour or two, to allow some respite to the horses, when he would proceed to the Wells, where arrangements had been made for his dining. Every apprehension being dissipated by this statement,

Sir Lionel, only considering how the event might be turned to his own advantage, proceeded immediately to Lady Fitzmauriee, to whom he communicated the unforeseen honour intended them by the king. The colour mounted rapidly into her cheeks at his recital, and her consternation seemed to be continually increasing, until he arrived at that part of the message which absolved them from providing any refreshments, when, forgetting her customary respect in her joy at the intelligence, she interrupted her husband, by clapping her hands two or three times, and exclaiming—"bone deus! bone deus!—now goodness be praised, for truly we should be eaten out of house and home, and ruined outright, by such a troop of dainty damsels and bearded pottle-suckers, whom, I warrant me, nothing would like but the stately pie, with a beaker of charneco, or Malmsey and Romney sack, at a shilling the gallon. Marry! we have had enough of feasts for one while, I trow, with those deep-mouthed toss-pot minstrels, who swallowed more of our

strong ale than they can pay us for in music, were they to scrape cat-gut or blow shawms till doomsday."

"Though his grace honour us not so far as to dine with us," said Sir Lionel, "it may pleasure his highness to partake some light repast."

"Lackaday, Sir Lionel, there is no making a light repast for so heavy a stomach as his. A light repast forsooth! Graincrey! he is no forty shilling sovereign, I promise ye, but one whose mouth cannot be filled without emptying your purse. He is neither chuff nor churl to deem salted hake, bran-bread, and a trencher of mammocks a feast for an alderman; but whether it be scamlyng days or lenten days he must have swans and venison, cranes and curlews, while nothing worse must he tipple, God help us! than spiced hippocras out of the great silver pot."

"Notwithstanding the which, Madam, it is my good pleasure that a repast be straightway provided for him; not a banquet, indeed, but such goodly, pleasant, and becoming cheer, as it

may befit the King to receive, and Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice to offer."

"Now marry, Heaven and good housewifery forbid! ye say it but to flout me, for by my holidame there is nothing within the walls but salted cod and ling, flecks of brawn, gammons of bacon, some hachins,* and powdered beef; there was a venison-pasty, indeed, but it was half eaten for this morning's dinner, and of last week's buck nothing remains but the shanks and umbles,† which I had put aside for the dogs."

"I have told you my will, Madam, and I desire you to obey it. If there be nothing else in The Tor House, there is money, which shall quickly stead us to do our need. Wherefore to the buttery, to the spicery and chaundry; and bestir ye quickly, while I give orders to the steward and the cook, that they may dispatch yeomen in all directions, to purvey for us in the King's name."

"Nay, Sir Lionel, if it be your good plea-

* Great sausages.

† These were sometimes made into a pye for the domestics, whence the metaphor of eating umble-pye.

sure to have it done, ye shall ever find me buxom to your will. Well-a-day, well-a-day! what a coil and a cost will now be toward, and where, I marvel, is all this scattering to end!" At these words she walked sorrowfully out of the apartment, while Sir Lionel hastened to give the necessary orders, first directing that Cecil should be instantly confined to his old prison in the great tower, and kept closely immured until after the departure of the royal visitant.

Seldom had The Tor House witnessed a more busy and bustling night than this. Lady Fitzmaurice, secured against all maculations by her canvass apron, and with a face reddened by fidgeting and fatigue, was seen or heard in every quarter, calling aloud upon Joan, Meg, Kate, Cecil, and Grace, or the different officers of the household, to know what was wanted in the respective departments, that she might take an account of every thing delivered out; earnestly exhorting them to be thrifty, and to have a shrewd eye to the royal grooms and varlets, who were no honester than those of other folks.

Beatrice, flattered at the prospect of appearing before all the young and gay gallants that usually figured in the King's train, was in deep consultation with her tirewoman, as to the most appropriate jewels and garments to be selected for such an important occasion, her father having signified his wish that she should appear with all becoming magnificence. Sir Lionel sate by himself in his own apartment, cogitating deep schemes for ingratiating himself with the King, and advancing his plots for the destruction of the abbot. Captain Basset, who had now recovered the use of his sword-arm, was busy in furbishing up a dress suit of regimentals, whose quondam splendour had been somewhat tarnished by time and neglect; or in drilling, arming, and arranging such of the servants as were destined to form a sort of royal guard, and fire off their harquebusses upon the King's arrival. Doctor Wrench, anticipating nothing less than instant promotion by the display of his classical attainments, sate up the whole night composing and learning by heart a most flaming and flattering oration. Cecil, the

rightful owner of the establishment, was the only person within it who remained in unoccupied ignorance of the intended visit. Entowered in his lofty prison, and prevented from sleeping by the various sounds of preparation from the buildings below, he was left to lose himself in vain conjectures as to the cause of this unusual hubbub, until long after midnight, when the noises having at length subsided, and the wearied inmates retired to rest, he was enabled to forget his wrongs, his sufferings, and surmises in undisturbed slumber.

On the following morning, all eyes were bent towards the road by which the illustrious visitants were expected to make their approach, long before there were any signs of their appearance. They were at length seen, forming with their attendants a long and motley line, that resembled an oriental caravan. Such was the scarcity of domestic comforts in those days, that when noblemen moved from one residence to another, they generally carried with them arras to hang on the naked walls of their castles, as well as their wardrobes, a portion of their furniture, and

even their household utensils. In the uncertainty of meeting even the most ordinary accommodations upon their route, it may be supposed that the court, upon one of these progresses, must necessarily be attended by a train of alarming longitude. Coaches were then unknown, nor were the roads, especially in these remoter provinces, at all adapted for such fragile vehicles. The most distinguished ladies rode upon palfreys, on pillions, or in horse-litters, which were a sort of palanquin, whose long projecting double poles were slung like shafts, upon one horse before, and another behind. Such was the conveyance chosen, upon the present occasion, for the Queen, who had been for some time slightly indisposed, and was travelling to the Wells for the benefit of her health.

First was discerned the royal party, consisting only of the King and Queen, with their immediate friends and attendants, all the rest of the cavalcade and train being ordered to keep considerably behind, to prevent annoyance from the dust. Even at a distance, the illustrious quality of the foremost company was easily re-

cognisable, by the flickering plumes and splendid dresses of the riders, as well as by the sparkling trappings of the horses, which flashed and glittered in the sun. Next came the knights, squires, and gentlemen, with some of the Queen's female attendants mounted upon pillions; and the band of music, which, as well as the court jester, invariably accompanied the King in his progresses; and lastly were seen the numerous servants and attendants of all sorts, with sumpter-horses and mules, laden with the royal apparatus for hunting, hawking, and shooting, and an endless variety of packages, whose names and contents it would be impossible to enumerate. A comet, irradiating the whole heavens with his fiery tail, could not have excited more sensation among the rustics of Somersetshire, than the apparition of such a grand and royal pageant, flaunting at full length along their quiet and sequestered meads.

When the king and his company at length reached the gate-house, Captain Basset's guard of honour fired off their harquebusses, and drew up on either side to salute him as he passed,

while Sir Lionel's band struck up a royal flourish; and in this manner his grace, who rode foremost, was proceeding towards the causeway, when Doctor Wrench, starting into the middle of the road, and throwing himself into an oratorical attitude, compelled the king to pull up his horse rather suddenly. The pedagogue's ruff was stiffly starched, his beard trimmed into a square shape, his pickerdevant sprinkled with rose-water, his left hand held his cap, his right hand was outstretched, and in this formal attitude, lifting up his twinkling eyes to the king, he began with a string of epithets, which he intended to be irresistibly flattering to the royal ear.—"Quemadmodùm, Rex clementissime, excellentissime, invictissime, illustrissime, gloriosissime, potentissime, celsissime, sacratissime, serenissime"—Heaven knows how many more "*issimes*" he might have collected out of his superlative Latin authorities, had he not been interrupted by the King, who, whatever might be his claim to the former appellations, had certainly none to the last, for he had already waxed vehemently wroth. He had a singular antipathy

to diminutive or deformed personages, Sir Ralph Sadleir being the only little man he was ever known to favour;—he hated a surprise that made him so suddenly check his horse;—he was hot and dusty, and anxious to reach the house;—under the influence of which combined feelings, he exclaimed with an angry frown—"Avaunt! avaunt! what? are we to stand in the sun, that thou mayest pelt us with thy quemadmodùms and quapropters?"

So saying, he was preparing to ride forward, but the pedant valued himself infinitely too much upon his Latinity to lose so glorious an opportunity for its display; he even presumed to allude to the king's frown, and, dropping his right arm, while the left was incontinently thrust up as its substitute, he continued—"Etsi conscius sum, Rex clementissime, nihil me dixisse quod serenissimæ fronti tuæ nebulam inducere debeat, acerbissimo tamen dolore——"

"Ha! say'st thou? What!" interrupted the King, in furious dudgeon, "did I not give thee the avaunt? Avoid! thou beast, thou

fool, thou caitiff dwarf, or by Holy Mary, I ride over thee!"—Spurring his horse at the moment, he would infallibly have executed his threat, had not the discomfited and crest-fallen pedant slipped nimbly aside, and taken refuge in the gate-house, leaving the cause-way open for the uninterrupted progress of the royal cavalcade. The ludicrous terror and rapidity, with which the doctor had at length bolted out of sight, seemed in some degree to have restored the King's good-humour; for, as he arrived at the principal entrance, where Sir Lionel, with his wife and daughter, and a richly decorated retinue, were waiting to receive him, he exclaimed with a gracious smile, "Ha! Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, what! still the same comely presence—still the same tall and proper man-at-arms? Time has been afraid to grapple with thee; for, beshrew the while! some heavy years have passed since I chid thine over-thwart father, and dubbed thee my champion of the bar."

Sir Lionel's nostrils dilated, and his beard moved up, as he ground his teeth together in

suppressed anger; for even from the King he could not bear this allusion to his illegitimate birth. Bowing his head to conceal his emotion, Henry noticed his scar, and continued—"Ha! I remember, they told me thou wert sore wounded; but, by St. John Baptist! I weened not it was so perilous a gash. Was it not in a border incursion, when the Scots unexpectedly struck alarum, and bade battle, somewhere in Glendale?"

"Not in Scotland, but in Northumberland, at the fight of Flodden Hill, so please your grace."

"True, true, when you were knighted on the field by the Earl of Surrey: in good sooth it likes me right well, Sir Lionel, to see thee of such hearty cheer, and bestowed in so goodly a mansion with such a fair and worshipful array."

Assisted by Lady Fitzmaurice and her daughter, the Queen had now alighted from her litter, and the royal pair, with their immediate followers, were ushered into the house, Henry fixing his eyes with a look of eager admiration upon Beatrice, by whose fine stature and commanding

style of beauty he appeared to be not a little struck.

The King had no sooner washed, and quaffed a cup of light French wine, than he desired private speech of his host, and declaring that he was warm with riding, and should prefer the open air to a close chamber, he was led forth to the Terrace, where he familiarly took Sir Lionel's arm, and walked up and down for some time, conversing on the subject of the abbot's alleged delinquencies, and occasionally stopping to view the venerable abbey, whose wide domains, forming a fair and fertile landscape, stretched almost as far as the eye could reach. Sir Lionel had taken care to provide himself with such communications as he knew would be acceptable. He had discovered new misdemeanours and contumacies of the abbot, and he placed in the King's hands a rent-roll of the royalties, lordships, manors, lands, tenements, woods, parks, fisheries, and other hereditaments belonging to the establishment, together with an inventory of the plate, jewels, and rich effects, within the abbey itself. This

the King read over with great apparent satisfaction, and having put it in his pocket, and thanked his host for his zeal and good services, they returned to the mansion.

"Though Sir Anthony Denny brought me your grace's commands not to provide a dinner," said Sir Lionel; "yet, deeming that it might not mislike your highness after so long a ride, I have ventured to order such a poor and light collation, as may better befit the scanty time allowed to us, than either our own good wishes, or your grace's royal dignity."

"Ha! say'st thou, Sir Lionel? is there good cheer toward? Now, marry, God and St. Mary forbid that we should put you to this trouble, and not do honour to your catering, however scant it may be. By my faith, it likes me well, and you have our thanks for your hospitable bearing; for to make good travellers, the rider should ever betake himself to the refectory when the horse finds his way to the crib. How says your grace?" He continued, addressing himself to the Queen. "We have yet some miles to ride ere dinner; and it were

not well for one in ailing health to be too long a faster."

"I am ever ready to do your highness's pleasure," replied the Queen; "but methinks we should await the presence of our good hostess, who has just left us, and will doubtless be of quick return."

"If it so please you, madam, my daughter shall fill her place, and be your hostess," said Sir Lionel; who never considered his wife as of the smallest consequence, and was, indeed, better pleased to be without her company.

"I cannot have a fairer or a more becoming one," replied the Queen with a gracious smile; and placing her arm within Beatrice's, she walked forward, the King and the rest of the company following her into the eating apartment. Lady Fitzmaurice, who had absented herself to superintend the serving up of the repast, and the last delivery of spices, plate, and wine, remained deeply absorbed in issuing orders and recommending economy, until she learnt that the royal party had left the cedar parlour, when she set off hastily to overtake

them. The canvas apron, which she had unwittingly worn in her first appearance before Dudley, had indeed been discarded; but the large bunch of keys which she had recently fastened to her girdle, remained there still; although their loud jingling would inevitably have reminded her of the inadvertence, had not her thoughts and senses been wholly engrossed by the multifarious articles she had just been serving out.

"Why, how now, Sir Lionel," cried the King, as she entered the room in a jog-trot, which gave the company the full benefit of her musical keys—"is your good dame so prone to play truant, that she must make known her steps by her jingling, like a packer's horse, or a shepherd's bell-wether."

The company laughed aloud, for royal jokes are infallible provocatives to risibility: Beatrice blushed deeply with mortification and anger; Sir Lionel, by a significant glance at the noisy appendages, at length drew his wife's attention to the cause of the general mirth, when she hastily deposited them in her pocket, and

curtsying deeply to the Queen, exclaimed—"La you now! I had clean forgotten them, for the which I humbly crave pardon: but I'm sure your grace is too good a housewife yourself not to take special care of the keys; for fast bind fast find, is an old saw and a good: and there would be rare waste, I promise ye, at The Tor House, were there not some one to turn the lock, and keep a hawk's eye upon our unthrifty varlets."

The Queen complimented her with great good humour, upon these evidences of her household wisdom; and the whole party proceeded to address themselves to the repast, with a zeal that promised to render the dinner bespoken for them at the Wells, an almost superfluous meal. "How, Sir Lionel; what!" cried the King—"call you this a light and poor collation? Beshrew my heart, if it be not a goodly feast and a dainty; and I much marvel how, upon such short warrant, you have so temptingly furnished forth your board. Forsooth, your good dame must needs be a shrewd and stirring cateress."

Annoyed, and even alarmed, as Lady Fitzmaurice had been, at the probable expense of entertaining the King, her hospitable feelings, now that the board was spread, had not only banished this recollection, but had completely removed the apprehension and awe, which, under any other circumstances, she would have felt towards so august an assemblage as the present. Still further encouraged by the King's allusion to herself, she ventured to reply to the observation addressed to Sir Lionel, by exclaiming: "Nay, by my sooth, we have spared neither care nor cost; and I trust it may like your good grace to eat heartily, for truly you are right welcome. May it please you to taste these red-rose apples, which are of rare size and quality; and, by the mass! they had good need to be so, for every one of them cost a silver shilling.'

"Methinks this venison frumenty," said the Queen, "is finer and more smooth than has ever been served up to me by the royal cooks."

"Ah, if your grace would do as I do," cried Lady Fitzmaurice, "you would ever have it

as good; for I trust neither wench nor varlet, who are too idle to stamp the wheat long enough, unless I stand over them while they bray it with the pestle. Is your grace's a marble mortar, or one of iron?"

Undismayed by the laugh occasioned by this inquiry, which, indeed, she deemed much too serious a matter to provoke risibility; and not noticing the displeasure of Sir Lionel and Beatrice, she continued:—"I am glad to see this pomme-citron likes your grace so well; it is of my own preserving, and I can give you the receipt. Bone Deus! see how heartily his good highness feeds upon yonder hens in bruette! Forsooth, your grace should ever provide him some, for they are soon prepared, and cheap. You take the hens, and scald them, cut them in gobbets, and seethe them with pork, pepper, ginger, and bread; temper it up with ale, colour it with saffron, seethe it together, and serve it forth. Ah, by my holidame! I see the King has a cunning and a dainty tooth, for he has now betaken himself to the wardens in paste, which it were well your

grace should also know how to furnish for him after the best fashion. Pare your wardens, cut out the core, stop the hole with sugar and powdered ginger, couch them in a coffin of paste, cover them, and let them bake. If you have not sugar enough, you may take honey; but then you must add powdered pepper to the ginger."

The King, who had been hitherto too eagerly engrossed with the viands before him to attend to any thing else, had no sooner allayed his appetite, than, observing the weak side of his hostess, he amused himself by drawing out all her culinary lore, to the egregious satisfaction of the courtiers, and the proportionate annoyance of Sir Lionel and his daughter. Soon wearied, however, of this pastime, he started up, and proposed that they should return to the parlour, where they had only remained a few minutes when the impatient monarch declared that it was time to depart, and ordered the horses to be got ready. Before this could be accomplished, a sudden and heavy rain set in, which precluded the possibility of travel-

ing, and promised to be of no short continuance. Observing the virginals in the parlour, and anxious to amuse the King, who instantly became spleenful and peevish under the smallest disappointment of his purposes, the Queen took Beatrice's hand, and, leading her to the instrument, requested her to play to them.

In the hurry of Dudley's departure from The Tor House, he had left behind him a book of Josquin's French songs, all of which Beatrice had learnt by heart; and she selected one of them for the present occasion which happened to have been a great favourite with the Queen, when she was yet a girl, and residing at the court of the French king, Francis the First. Many years had elapsed since she had heard it, and it conjured up a train of delicious youthful recollections, associated with her happy days, in the pleasant country of France, which at once soothed and saddened her heart, now that she had been long enough married to feel that the King's wife was only a splendid slave, and that she had been much happier in her early obscurity than in her present grandeur. She made

Beatrice play over the whole collection, every song, as it awakened some new scene that had long lain dormant in her memory, being listened to with fresh delight, and increasing her predilection for the performer, who had thus, as if by magic, raised up the ghost of her youthful happiness—willingly would she have encored every ditty, but although the rain had not yet entirely ceased, the King was becoming impatient to be gone. A long habit of self-indulgence having exhausted all the gratifications that life could afford, he was ever haunted by satiety and ennui, while in the vain hope that his unpleasant sensations might be removed by a mere change of locality, he exhibited a perpetual restlessness. So little could he brook disappointment, that he was even angry with the elements for detaining him, and the Queen too will knew his irascible temper to propose any longer delay. Desirous, however, to protract as long as possible her separation from Beatrice, with whom she was singularly pleased, she invited her to accompany them on horseback to the Wells, during the ride to which place her

companion so much gained upon her affections, that she dispatched a messenger to the Tor House, requesting her father's permission to retain his daughter with her, so long as the royal party should remain in Somersetshire. Sir Lionel gladly complied, nor was he less gratified at signifying his thankful acquiescence, when, in a few days, the queen sent a messenger to announce to him that she had given Beatrice an appointment about her person, and proposed that she should accompany the court to London. He knew that she would have much better opportunities of advancement under such exalted patronage, than any that she could expect at home; nor was he without hope that she might obtain sufficient influence to assist his own projects of further spoliation and aggrandisement. For Beatrice herself, it is needless to state that she was delighted beyond all measure at this unexpected and sudden change in her fate. Accustomed from her infancy to consider splendour and exalted station as the sole objects of a dignified ambition, and the infallible dispensers of happiness, she deemed an appoint-

ment about the Queen's person, and a residence in a royal palace, as the very summit of human felicity: under the influence of which impressions she set off for the metropolis, her heart swelling with a thousand undefined anticipations of gaiety and glory.

Paramount as had been Sir Lionel's previous sway, it was confirmed into a still more indisputable supremacy by these occurrences. The assembled neighbourhood, collected by the news of the King's visit to The Tor House, had seen him walking arm in arm with the monarch in confidential communication, upon the terrace; it was naturally conjectured that he would possess quick and easy access to the royal ear by means of his daughter; and, however oppressive might be his future measures, there seemed to be no use in struggling against his tyranny; no safety but in implicit obedience to his will.

CHAPTER IV.

A woman and so fell !—a wife,
Yet fiercely seek her husband's life !
What pois'nous canker
Could thus pervert a female heart ?
Alas ! 'tis maddened by the smart
Of jealous rancour.

In the midst of the general fear and even awe that he inspired, in the very crisis of his apparent triumph over all his enemies, Sir Lionel himself was struck aghast by mingled dread and rage, at another apparition of the strange lady, whose previous visits had never failed to affect him with similar bursts of passionate emotion. Her appearance was, as usual, announced to Lady Fitzmaurice by her watchful maid, whose own curiosity to know the meaning of these mysterious and violent interviews at least

equalled that of her mistress. Again did she venture near enough to the door of Sir Lionel's room to catch the sounds of fierce menace and angry defiance; again had she seen him, after his visitant had retired, summon the lawyer to private consultation, with every mark of perturbation and dismay; and again had she reported all these appearances, not without certain exaggerations, to her mistress, whose affectionate bosom was filled with a thousand vague apprehensions for her husband's safety.

The mystery, however, was now about to be solved, and her fears to assume a more distinct, though not less alarming, form. To her consternation not less than her surprise, she was told that the strange lady, instead of having left the house as usual, was waiting below, and desired to speak with her in private. Anxious to preserve secrecy in an affair which seemed so deeply to implicate Sir Lionel, Lady Fitzmaurice desired that she might be conducted to her own room, where she awaited the lady's coming with the most intense anxiety, every presentiment assuring her that she was about to

receive some startling and terrible intelligence. What it might be, she could not possibly conjecture, although every moment of the thrilling suspense, that preceded the appearance of her visitant, gave some new direction to her fears. At length approaching footsteps were heard; her heart beat tumultuously at the sound; and when the door opened, and she stood up to receive her visitant, her bosom heaved with such a vehement agitation that she was utterly unable to speak. With a pale and agitated face, and her eyes still angrily sparkling from the effect of her recent interview with Sir Lionel, the stranger walked slowly into the room, placed herself in a chair, and with the air of a superior addressing one of lower rank, intimated by her gestures, that Lady Fitzmaurice also might be seated,—a permission which was obeyed in silence. The maid still remained in the room, busily employed about the clothes-press, though without making the smallest noise, in the apparent hope that her presence would be unnoticed; but the stranger, looking at her with a haughty frown, pointed to the door, and

waved her hand that she should begone. The gesture was too imperative to be disobeyed, and the abigail reluctantly withdrew, when the stranger having arisen to bolt the door, resumed her seat, and proceeded thus to address her wondering companion :—

" You need not, madam, eye me with a look so keen and searching ; you know me not, nor is it likely that you should, for I have moved above you. It has liked me well to learn, that in your present station you have demeaned yourself with a humble and a lowly bearing, as one who knew her birth, and I am therefore right glad that I have delayed the tidings I bring you, till you could hear them with unmingled joy. I have a communication to make that will fill your heart with content and gladsomeness. I need not tell you,—for you must have deeply felt them,—the many wrongs heaped upon you by Sir Lionel, the contempt in which he holds you, your insignificance in this house, the alienation of his affections (if, indeed, he ever valued aught but your fortune,)

and the public scandal with which he scatters this, as well as his other spoils and robberies, upon an overbold and wasteful paramour, whom he hath dared to set up in the house of the man he murdered—the late Lord Dawbeney."

"Alack! alack! are these the pleasant tidings I was to hear?" cried Lady Fitzmaurice—"they may be sooth, as to my sorrow I fear they be; but how are they to solace my sick heart, or bid it be of good cheer?"

"Because, madam, I come to restore to you your liberty; to enable you to retain your fortune; to set you free from the man whom you most hate, by proving to you that he is not your husband."

"How! not my husband? may gracious heaven and all good angels forbid it! what mean you?"

"Prythee, good madam," replied the stranger with a contemptuous expression, "why look you thus aghast? why does the colour quit your cheek? and why cling you to the chair as if you feared to fall?"

"Bone Deus! Bone Deus! how can you ask me such a bootless question? know you not that I am the Lady Fitzmaurice?"

"I know that you have borne the name: I congratulate you that you will do so no longer; for with shame and anger do I make the degrading avowal that *I* am the Lady Fitzmaurice, the first, the only lawful wife of Sir Lionel! Nay, madam, start not, but listen to me, although it irks me to the very soul to tell my tale. It is a strange one, and will show still more so when I tell you that I am a Bohun,—one of that ancient and right noble family, whose name was never contaminated until I was won, Heaven knows by what blind and fond delusion, to wed the base-born adventurer, the knave as well as villain, that bears the name of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice. His wrongs, his infidelity, his insults—(holy St. Mary! insults to a Bohun, and from such a harlot's son as this!)—these were endured for a short time, but they have never been forgotten. We parted in bitter wrath; and in the pestilence that soon after ravaged England, 'twas bruited about that I

had died. Nay, I gave it out so myself, for I was ashamed of the dishonour I had brought upon my family.—I discarded the base name of my husband; resumed that which belonged to my illustrious ancestors; and stationing spies about Sir Lionel, even in his household, who should report to me his daily doings, I retired into obscurity, where I had at length the delight to learn that he was married."

"Now well-a-day! well-a-day! madam, if this dismal tale be sooth, how could you feel delight that two fellow-creatures should be thus betrayed; and what could be the motive of such cruel conduct?"

"Revenge!" cried the stranger in a triumphant voice, at the same time convulsively grasping the arm of her companion, while her eyes flashed, and her face became distorted with a malignant joy that gave an altogether unnatural appearance to her fair and delicate features; "I should have died with shame and indignation, had not my heart been nourished with the hope of revenge. Upon this have I lived for years, and have only forborne to wreak it, that

I might render it the more signal and overwhelming. I have waited till his ambition should be gratified, till he should climb up to the top of Fortune's wheel, that I might dash him down from the greater height, and with the more stinging ignominy. The hour is at length come—the measure of his iniquities is full, the summit of his glory is gained—and not even the devils with whom he is in league shall stead him in this extremity. Is he not a sacrilegious dabbler in all forbidden and unholy things; a murderer and an usurper? are not his mansion and all its wide domains the property of the youth, whom he audaciously imprisons in it as a lunatic? has he not, by his devilish arts, destroyed and plundered, as it pleased him? and is he not at this moment perched upon the very pinnacle of his pride—feared by the whole world, honoured by the King, and his daughter made a Queen's companion? This is the hour, for which I have so long and so impatiently waited. His guilt and his prosperity can go no further; and I have at length come forward from my retreat, that I

might topple him down headlong into the dust."

"Alas, alas! and have you the heart to do it? I care not what may become of myself, but Heaven and all good angels forefend that so sore an evil should betide Sir Lionel. What penalty is adjudged him by the law for this offence?"

"Death!" cried the stranger, striking her hand sharply upon a small table beside her, and resuming that distorted look of triumph she had before displayed. "Dost think aught else would appease me? When was a Bohun ever known to be insulted, without washing away the stain with the blood of the offender? He is doomed to die, and by the hands of the common hangman, or I were but half avenged."

Lady Fitzmaurice fell back in her chair, stricken with a profound horror, and gasping for breath. Sinking at length at the feet of her visitant, she exclaimed in faltering accents, "Now, for the love of Christ and his blessed mother, spare him!—spare him, and forego your dreadful purpose! I will fly from him and give him up, or do your bidding, whichever

way it tend; but I implore you, on my knees, let not Sir Lionel be thus ignominiously done to death."

"You speak like a churl's daughter," said the stranger with a look of scorn; "had you a drop, a single drop, of better blood in your veins, it would long since have boiled with indignation at your wrongs, and you would have rejoiced to see them thus avenged."

"I have sworn at God's altar to love and honour him."

"Why, so have I, thou tame and abject recreant! but these vows were reciprocal, and only binding upon the wife while they were observed by the husband. When first broken by him, my love was instantly turned to hatred, my honour lay in the hope of vengeance. You have sworn to nothing—your oaths were not legal, for he was not, and could not be, your husband."

"Oh, then let me cling to him and protect him as the man whom I once loved—as my friend—as the being whom I hope to convert from his guilty errors, to see him abjure his

unholy pursuits, to reconcile him to himself and Heaven, so that, if I die first, I may leave him in the way of salvation—if I survive him, I may live in the blessed belief that he is gone before me to receive mercy and forgiveness!"

"Was ever such a mean and crawling craven! Forgiveness for Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice! and implored by one whom he has thus wronged! Why, thou fond fool, thou simple abject gull, thy head will be engraved to be stuck upon the ballads of Patient Grisele; and the hawkers shall cry thee about the streets, for the human spaniel that fawned upon the foot that spurned it."

"Alas! alas! call me what names you list, but once more I implore you not to put Sir Lionel to this extremity and shame;—if not for my sake, oh, spare him for that of Beatrice! You would not make your own daughter fatherless?"

"Did he not make me childless, when he took her from me? He left me nothing to nurse or nourish but my revenge: this have I fostered as my child, and by this I swear that

Sir Lionel shall do atonement to me and to the law by his death! My noble relatives are all eager to support me, and to tear him down from his usurped eminence; the proceedings are begun; the case is clear; his doom is sealed; we want nothing but some additional evidence of his second marriage. None can so well furnish it as yourself: it is for this purpose I have sought the present interview; for your nuptials seem to have been secret, and we have yet found no witnesses to the ceremony. You will have a legal summons to attend upon the trial; and when you have better recollected your wrongs, you will doubtless come forward with alacrity to re-obtain possession of your fortune—to set yourself free from a faithless wretch who despises and insults you—to avenge the numerous victims who have perished by his sword or his subtleties—to rid the world of a monster by whom it has been too long braved and outraged."

At these words she walked disdainfully out of the room, leaving Lady Fitzmaurice (whom we shall continue to call by that name) still

kneeling—an attitude from which, indeed, her visitant had never attempted to raise her, and in which she remained for some time after her departure, too much bewildered and stunned, by the intelligence she had heard, to move or speak. No sooner did her recollection return to her, than she availed herself of her supplicating posture to put up the most fervent prayers to Heaven for the preservation of Sir Lionel, as well as for his conversion to the ways of righteousness and salvation; and, having in some degree allayed her agony by these intercessions, accompanied by a flood of tears, she threw herself down upon her bed to take counsel of her own sad thoughts, how she should act in this most distressing emergency.

When the stranger, who passed by the name of Mrs. Bohun, and who was indeed what she had represented herself to be—the first wife of Sir Lionel—had determined to emerge from her obscurity and execute her long-cherished purpose of revenge, she had proceeded with the same wariness and deliberation that had induced her to postpone the wreaking of her

wrath until it could be done signally and effectually. She knew the character with which she had to deal—that he was crafty as well as audacious, not easy to circumvent, still more difficult to intimidate—and she determined, therefore, to leave nothing to chance; but so to entangle and hook this desperate transgressor, that his first atonement to herself and to the world should be a public and a final one. As the law then stood, the offence of which he had been guilty was punishable by death; and although the perfect ignorance in which it was committed would in these days be a sufficient security for the life of so unconscious an offender, it offered no such guarantee in the time of Henry VIII., when it was difficult to say whether the legal enactments were conceived or executed in the more barbarous, vengeful, and bloodthirsty spirit. To guard herself against any mitigation of the sentence, she waited till a judge was appointed to travel that circuit, whom she knew to be personally hostile to Sir Lionel, from his relationship to the Lord Dawbeney, one of his victims, and who had been

heard to declare, that if he once obtained an opportunity of ridding the world of him, he would take good care that he should not escape. The attorney she employed was also one who had suffered by Sir Lionel's machinations, and who was actuated by a most rancorous spirit of hostility to seek his destruction. Numerous and powerful, her noble relations, who felt the injuries she had received, as insults to the name of Bohun, espoused her quarrel with the greatest ardour, and promised to support her, when she at length determined to come forward, with all the influence of the family; so that no measure seemed to have been neglected, which could ensure the success of her cause and the utter ruin of Sir Lionel.

As soon as all these arrangements had been completed, she proceeded to the Tor House, to overwhelm him with the intelligence of her existence, and of the means that had been employed to bring down quick and inevitable destruction upon his head. She had long looked forward to this moment of personal triumph over her victim. She enjoyed it with the keen-

ness of a violent and vindictive woman, wronged in the tenderest point until her love had been converted into a bitter and malignant hatred. Not content with these tidings, astounding as they were, she tormented him still further, by informing him, that while he had been spreading his wiles and snares for others, he had been himself entangled in her's—that she had surrounded him with spies in his own household; and the taunt stung him to the very heart, when she declared, that in the midst of all his subtle machinations, he had suffered himself to be circumvented, undermined, and outwitted by a woman.

Such were the subjects of those furious encounterings, of that exulting menace and fierce defiance, which had been loud enough to reach the ears of her maid, and fill the bosom of Lady Fitzmaurice with painful apprehensions, although neither of them at the moment could divine their immediate import. One, or even two, of these stormy interviews were not sufficient to appease the vindictive feelings of Mrs.

Bohun, whose assumed name we shall continue to assign to her. She loved to banquet her heart upon the sight of his passion and dismay; to reproach him with his enormities; to twit him with his simplicity in falling into the pit that she had digged for him; to defy him to escape, whether he might call man or devil to his aid. But these meetings, inveterate and wrathful as the battling of two evil spirits, were now over. The moment of trial drew near—Lady Fitzmaurice had received a formal summons to attend—and the strange lady came only once more to the Tor House, which was to ask her whether it was her intention to comply with the notice.

"Alas! alas!" she exclaimed, in answer to this inquiry, "how can I do otherwise? the law must be obeyed—it is my intention to be present at the trial."

"Enough!" replied her companion: "I knew that you would at length feel your wrongs; that you would do your duty to yourself, to truth, to the world, by bringing down justice upon

the common enemy. By this resolution you have proved yourself worthy to have had gentle blood in your veins. Farewell!"

The immediate destruction, that now hung over the head of Sir Lionel, fled from mouth to mouth with an inconceivable rapidity, agitating the whole of Somersetshire, but more especially his own neighbourhood, in the most violent manner. Excepting among his own creatures and dependants, the predominant feeling was joy at the prospect of being so suddenly emancipated from his tyranny: even among the retainers there was such doubt and defection, that several slunk away from his service; while his many secret enemies, emboldened by the prospect of his inevitable downfall, came forward to join the few who had still refused to acknowledge his supremacy. The family of the Bohuns were not inactive; they marshalled their followers, whose numbers and consequence inspired a confidence of victory in the whole party, collected to support the law in dethroning the formidable King of the Hill. Badges were assumed by both sides, in order that the comrades

might be respectively known; and a deputation of the Bohuns waited upon the Abbot of Glastonbury, requesting that a body of his servants and retainers might be sent to Wells, where the trial was to take place, that they might strengthen the hands of justice, and prevent his ancient and most implacable enemy from escaping, should he be condemned, or from so intimidating the jury by the display of his power, as to compel them to acquit him. In this matter, however, the good prelate positively declined all interference, declaring that, however rejoiced he might be to learn the overthrow of such a ruthless oppressor and evil-doer, it became him not as a minister of peace to exhibit a hostile array, even in the support of the law, and still less in vindication of his private quarrel, in which he desired no better champions than truth and justice, no stronger support than the conviction of his own innocence.

Sir Lionel in the mean time was bestirring himself with an energy proportionate to the magnitude of the danger. Conscious that their own fate was to a considerable degree involved

in that of their master, the greater part of his followers were not only staunch, but became emboldened by a species of desperation which would act as a counterpoise to the numerical superiority of their opponents, should they happen to possess that advantage; while many in the neighbourhood remained firm to his cause, in the belief that by some charm, or enchantment, or diabolical aid, he would prove as victorious in this struggle as he had done in so many others of a scarcely less desperate nature. Nor were there wanting strange and mysterious manifestations about the Tor House, which lent a considerable countenance to this supposition: but whatever collateral aid Sir Lionel might expect of a supernatural description, it was obvious that he did not trust to it exclusively; for his treasures were lavishly diffused, not only for the purposes of bribery and subornation, but of collecting such a band of armed and resolute followers as might operate upon the fears of the jury, and deter them from giving a verdict which would quickly bring him to an ignominious death. Menaces were openly made,

that if he were driven to this extremity, the jury should perish with him; and his own desperate character, not less than the nature and number of his coadjutors, offered a certain pledge that this was not an empty vaunt, although the atrocious attempt might eventually be frustrated by the vigilance and force of the opposite party.

Alarmed by these hostile demonstrations, which seemed to recall the wars of the Roses, or the insurrection of Perkin Warbeck's time, the Sheriff of Somersetshire began to apprehend that the posse comitatûs would be overpowered, and not only dispatched letters to the government to state his fears, but sent to Bristol, requesting that a company or two of the troops, which were about to embark from that port for Ireland, might be ordered to his support until the trial should be concluded. These forces, however, had sailed when his messenger arrived, and there was no time for receiving assistance from the government; so that he was left to his own resources, and to the hope that by adding the civil power to one of the parties, he might

so overawe the other as to prevent any open breach of the peace.

Lady Fitzmaurice had held no communication with her husband on this all-important subject, nor was he aware that she had been summoned to give evidence on the trial. She was always placid and mild, although with a tinge of melancholy which the benevolent smile of her resignation could not altogether subdue. This pensive expression, however, seemed to wear off as the day of trial drew near; she moved about with an air of confidence and self-importance quite inconsistent with her usual demeanour, and whenever she encountered her husband, contemplated him with a smile of affectionate complacency, or spoke to him in a tone of consolation and endearment. In all this, the unfortunate Sir Lionel, according to his usual estimate of human nature, saw nothing but joy at the prospect of his downfall and death, clumsily attempted to be concealed beneath hypocritical professions of an increased regard; and the indifference or contempt, with which he had always beheld her, and which was

now aggravated into hatred by considering her as the exulting cause of his present peril, led him to repel all her approaches with a stern and even fierce command, that she should not pester him with her presence at a moment of such absorbing difficulty.

Unoffended by this forbidding return to her advances, and without communicating her purpose to a single human being, she waited for the morning of trial, when she mounted her horse, and rode off unattended towards Wells. The road was crowded with partizans, and bands of country people, all converging to the same point, all variously interested in the same event, all discoursing of the same subject. As she drew nearer to the town, the throng not only increased, but assumed a more tumultuous character; the different parties, who were easily recognized by their respective badges, encountering one another with insulting cries and menaces, or occasionally skirmishing with their clubs, although the majority seemed disposed to wait the result of the trial before they regularly measured strength with their opponents. Through this

noisy and threatening multitude she rode on unmolested, unknown to many, and civilly treated where she was recognized; for the Bohuns, knowing the value of her evidence, had given strict orders that she should not suffer the smallest indignity. There was, indeed, little necessity for this command; for such was the influence of her lowly unobtrusive virtues, and so completely was she separated from Sir Lionel in the public opinion, that all parties were unanimous in affording her the homage of their respect.

In this manner did she reach the town of Wells, where she dismounted, and forcing her way, not without considerable difficulty, through the crowd, proceeded to the Sessions House, made herself known, was instantly escorted into court, and placed within the bar on a bench appropriated to the witnesses. The hall was nearly filled within, and completely surrounded without, by the civil power; for the judge, who had made sure of condemning Sir Lionel, anticipated a riot and assault, and had directed the sheriff to make special provi-

sion for the personal safety of himself and the jury. There was still, however, a considerable number of the respective partisans within the building, whose menacing looks sufficiently attested the necessity of these precautions against tumult.

The hall was now thronged almost to suffocation—the judge had taken his seat, looking with a stern and dread aspect upon Sir Lionel's partisans huddled together on one side of the building—the name and offence of the culprit had been proclaimed, and the judge was about to charge the grand jury with his offence, when Lady Fitzmaurice, rising up and addressing herself to his lordship, declared that she had something to state which would render all further proceedings unnecessary, and save the time and labour of the court. These words were only partially heard by the bystanders; and such was the eagerness to ascertain their import, and the consequent buzz that ran round the crowd, as they all pressed more eagerly forward to listen, that some time elapsed before silence could be obtained. This was no

sooner accomplished, than casting down her eyes, while her face was suffused with a deep blush, Lady Fitzmaurice thus proceeded to address the judge.

"Indeed, indeed, my lord, I would rather lose a limb of my body, or have my tongue cut from my mouth, than give you such speech as I am about to utter, or make this grievous declaration of my shame; but since I have been summoned to give evidence in this matter, it becomes me not to waste the time of your lordship and the jury, but to inform you that it were vain to let the proceedings go forward, since in good sooth I was never married to Sir Lionel, and I am willing to leave him, and go back to the obscurity from which he took me, and leave his lawful and rightful wife to——"

"How sayest thou, woman, what!" interrupted the judge angrily, "speak up,—never married to Sir Lionel, saidst thou?"

"Alas, alas! my lord, it is true—I said so: expose me not to more shame by making me repeat the word."

"Talk not to me of shame, thou brazen

harlotry!—Was ever such a bold-tongued wanton—such a saucy giglot as this? And hast thou dared, being only the paramour, the mistress, the concubine of this man, to take the name, style, and title of Lady Fitzmaurice? Wretch! thou art punishable by the law."

"Alack, alack! I know it—I desire it all—and I am willing to abide it."

"Woman! woman! thou art but a churl's daughter, it is true; but thou hast brought down infamy upon an honest name, for thy father, the good borough-reeve of Frome, whom I well knew, was a man of fair approof, and well respected."

"Bone Deus! bone Deus! my lord," cried Lady Fitzmaurice, falling upon her knees and clasping her hands, while the tears suddenly gushed from her eyes, "do not, for the love of Jesus, fling a reproach upon the grave of that good man, lest he spring from his winding-sheet, and rise up to curse his daughter. Spare him—mention not his name; I can bear any thing but this. Oh my father! my poor father!"—She sobbed violently, and leant for support

against the railing, hiding her face in her hands.

" Thou art already accused of all good men," said the judge; " thou hast stopped the trial, and Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice has escaped, but as for thee, I will so brand thee"—a loud shout of triumph from Sir Lionel's partisans, when they heard this official confirmation of his escape, drowned the judge's voice with a deafening clamour. In vain did he angrily desire the constables and javelin-men to do their duty and seize the rioters, declaring that the trial should still proceed:—as his orders were not heard, and could not have been executed, he hastily dissolved the court, and withdrew in furious dudgeon, while the adherents of the King of the Hill, who were waiting without the building, learning his triumph from those within, rent the air with their acclamations, and exultingly defied their adversaries, until the whole vicinity became a tumultuous scene of uproar and confusion.

Trembling and humiliated, and hiding her face as much as possible in her hood, Lady

Fitzmaurice was endeavouring to steal through the clamorous crowd, when she was unfortunately recognized by a party of the Bohuns, who not only stigmatized her with every opprobrious epithet that could degrade her sex, but were proceeding to assault her with a brutal violence which might have proved fatal, had she not been rescued by a band of Sir Lionel's followers, by whom she was escorted to her horse, and accompanied as a body-guard to the Tor House. As to Sir Lionel, his return was a triumphal procession, accompanied with every noisy demonstration that could signalize his victory. The Bohun party did, indeed, collect themselves with the intention of making an attack upon their opponents, but so many of their late adherents had slunk away, and assumed the colours of Sir Lionel the moment they learnt his success, that they deemed it more prudent to decamp quietly, and leave the King of the Hill to the unmolested enjoyment of his good fortune.

No sooner did Lady Fitzmaurice reach her own apartment than she threw herself upon her

knees, humbly imploring the forgiveness of heaven for the falsehood she had so publicly uttered to save her husband's life, declaring that it was done to prevent his becoming the prey of the great enemy of mankind, should he die in his present state, as well as in the hope that his preservation might bring him to repentance, and restore him to himself, to virtue, and to the chance of salvation. Hitherto her courage and firmness had been upheld by the necessity for their exertion, by the conviction that her self-possession was required for her husband's safety, by the suggestions of her conscience, that she ought not to lose a moment in imploring forgiveness for the falsehood she had uttered, though not upon oath, in a public court of justice. But when these duties were discharged—when, on proceeding to Sir Lionel's apartment, she beheld him rescued from an ignominious death, reinstated in the possession of his mansion, flushed with the triumph of his victory, and welcoming her as she approached with a smile of unaccustomed gladness, her feelings almost instantly overcame her. She ran wildly towards him, screaming out—"Oh,

my husband! my husband!—you are saved! you are saved!" burst into an hysterical passion of laughter, threw herself into his arms, and fainted away.

Even Sir Lionel was affected by this unequivocal manifestation of an affection,—a devotedness that was proof against long continued unrequital, alienation, and contempt. He could not understand it. It baffled all his theories of human nature: it disproved all the selfishness which he had conceived to be inwoven with the very heart's core of his fellow-creatures; it controverted all his maxims; it reproached his whole line of conduct. Equally unable to attribute interested motives to her proceeding, or to contest the depth and reality of her affection, his pride took refuge in the old expedient of setting her down for a fond fool, who was only less base than mankind in general, because she was a greater simpleton. So difficult did he find it to disabuse himself of the belief in some undivulged cause for her generous conduct, that almost his first question, after she had recovered her senses, was to inquire her motives for thus voluntarily condemn-

ing herself to infamy, by the utterance of a public and deliberate falsehood.

"My dear Sir Lionel," she replied; "for, alas! I must not call you my husband: what motive *could* I have had, but to preserve from shameful death the man whom I had sworn to love and honour?—not only from death here, but from death hereafter! Nay, now, think not so poorly of me as to dream that I would reclaim my fortune. By my sooth, and on my soul! I would not touch a tester of it. Thus far, at least, they cannot prevent my being your wife; and if I may not bear the name, let me be your friend, your counsellor, your preserver from a worse peril than this of the trial,—and I will not ask a better solace for the shame that I have brought down upon my head." And then, with the most earnest and fervent entreaties, she besought him to detach himself from his evil courses; to retread the paths of peace; to abjure all foul alliances; to reconcile himself to Heaven. Upon this subject he was never a patient listener; his mind was made up, whether right or wrong, too

firmly to be diverted from its course by reasoning or advice, and his pride revolted from the idea of being catechised by his wife. Even her recent service, vital as it was, could not reconcile him to such degradation; and though he would not hurt her feelings by any harsh dismissal, he pleaded the necessity of hastily leaving her, that he might thank his numerous adherents, who were still loudly huzzaing around the building, and give orders for their being treated with the best ale that the cellar would supply.

Under the influence of this potent liquor, which was liberally distributed to all comers, the precincts of the Tor Hill exhibited an uproarious scene of riot and revelry, until the moon had arisen to light home the wassailers; many of whom had especial need of her assistance, to save them from ponds and pitfalls. Captain Basset was in all his glory, toasting his noble master, and filling the flagon, and roaring scraps of Bacchanalian songs, till he began to brawl in his cups, and drew his rapier upon one of his own party; when a mutual friend kindly

knocked him down with the black jack; and rolling him into the wood-house, left him to sleep himself sober, and reconcile himself to his bruises as he best might. As was customary upon all occasions of unusual resort to the mansion, Cecil had been conveyed to his prison in the tower, where he remained for some time deprived of his sleep, and as unable to account for the tumultuous merry-making beneath him, as he had been upon occasion of the royal visit.

A very different scene was being acted in the town of Wells, where the self-styled Mrs. Bohun had taken up her abode. Violent and vindictive as she was, she had not been so exclusively actuated by revenge in her late proceedings, as she had stated in her interview with Lady Fitzmaurice. This motive had doubtless influenced her conduct for a long time past; and would ultimately have led her to make a public attempt upon her husband's life; but her long-cherished design had been accelerated by the addition of another passion, not less powerful

than her thirst of vengeance. She had become violently attached to a young man of desperate fortunes but of noble family, who, in the hope of advancing himself by her high connexions, was willing to marry her if she could become disengaged from her first nuptials. No method appeared so simple or so feasible as to procure the death of Sir Lionel by the hands of justice; no pains were spared to accomplish an object which all her family desired as earnestly as herself; and according to the opinion of their legal advisers, not a doubt could be entertained of their success. To have all her hopes thus suddenly dashed to the ground in the very moment of anticipated victory,—to be at the same instant robbed of the revenge upon which her heart had been so long feeding, disappointed in her love, humiliated by the defeat of herself and all her proud relatives, and stung to the innermost soul by the triumph of the man she most hated upon earth;—all this was more than a woman of such ungovernable passions could endure. In a transport of sudden

rage she swallowed poison on the very night of the trial, and next morning was found dead in her bed!

It were needless to state Sir Lionel's gratification upon learning these tidings, which effectually relieved him from all future apprehensions. Delicacy towards a family who had so recently sought his destruction, was of course entirely out of the question, and he therefore proposed to Lady Fitzmaurice that they should be immediately and publickly re-married. That he should be influenced to this proposition by any wish to secure a legal claim to her fortune, never entered into the thoughts of this single-minded woman, who judged other hearts by the generosity of her own. Lowered as she must be in public estimation, by having confessed herself, however falsely, and with whatever magnanimous motive, to be Sir Lionel's mistress, she saw nothing but an unexampled condescension in his now coming forward to make her indeed his wife, to confirm her station in society, to uphold her character, to restore her to her own approbation, as well as to that of the world in general. After the

celebration of her second nuptials, her humble though devoted attachment to her husband, exalted by a feeling of gratitude, became even more fervent than before. Sir Lionel himself, unaccustomed as he was to any compunctious visitings, had the decency to abstain for some time from open outrage upon her feelings; so that the harassed and care-worn Lady Fitzmaurice was allowed to enjoy an interval of comparative tranquillity. And thus was the fortunate King of the Hill once more victorious over all his enemies, left to the unmolested enjoyment of his triumph, and to the increased homage which was excited by the belief that his human or infernal abettors would carry him with equal success through every future difficulty, and entail inevitable destruction and death upon all those who should dare to struggle with his power, or even question his supremacy.

CHAPTER V.

In Sanctuary may be sought
Protection from the evils wrought,
By fellow-creatures;
From foes it may preserve our life;
But what can save us from the strife
Of our own natures?

It is time now, that we should revert to Dudley, whom we left just entering the Sanctuary of Westminster, where he took care to have himself registered in the books as a sanctuary-man, and to pay the fees which entitled him to all the privileges of the place. When he had first agreed to betake himself to this asylum, it had merely suggested itself to his mind as a refuge for political offenders, or for those men who having been reduced to poverty by fire, tempests, the chances of the sea, or other inevitable mis-

fortunes, might seek protection from persecution or cruel creditors, under the wing of the church—and such probably was the original purpose of the institution. But it had long been converted into an abuse more abominable than that of the money-changers in the temple, who turned the house of God into a den of thieves. In Edward the Fifth's reign, the Duke of Buckingham had been justified in exclaiming—"Now look how few sanctuary-men there be, whom necessity or misfortune compelled to go thither! and then see on the other side, what a sort there be commonly therein, of such whom wilful unthriftiness hath brought to naught; what a rabble of thieves, murderers, and malicious, heinous traitors they be, and that in two places especially,—the one at the elbow of the city, and the other in the very bowels.* I dare well avow it, if you weigh the good they do with the hurt that cometh of them, ye shall find it much better to lose both than to have both. And this I say, although they were not abused, (as they now be, and so long have been,) that I fear me ever

* Westminster Abbey and St. Martin's le Grand.

they will be, while men be afeard to set their hands to the amendment ; as though God and St. Peter were the patrons of ungracious living. Now unthrifts riot and run in debt upon boldness of these places ; yea, and rich men run thither with poor men's goods ; there they build, there they spend, and bid their creditors go whistle. Men's wives run thither with their husbands' plate, and say they dare not abide with their husbands for beating : thieves bring thither stolen goods, and live thereon. There devise they new robberies nightly, and steal out, and rob, rive, and kill men, and come again into those places, as though they gave them not only a safeguard for the harm that they have done, but a licence also to do more mischiefs."*

Since this period the abuse had been in some respects limited, but still enough remained to render the above description, not very inapplicable to the present condition of the place ; and Dudley, on retiring from the office where he paid his fees, was clamorously assailed by a mob of

* Halls Chronicle, p. 354.

untried malefactors, runaway spendthrifts, and loose women, whose appearance and manner indicated that it might not be very safe to resist their demand of a contribution equivalent to the garnish-money of our modern prisons.

This donation, or rather extortion, was placed in the hands of a collector, and when it amounted to a sufficient sum, was devoted to the laudable purpose of a banquet, which, by the assistance of the potent Lambeth ale operating upon such unscrupulous characters, generally terminated in a nocturnal sortie against some quarter of the neighbourhood, and a suitable addition to the broken heads, as well as the stolen goods and chattles of the Sanctuary. Glad to escape from this rude rabblement, he was hastening towards his own lodgings when he was accosted by two men of gentlemanly address and demeanour, although their attire betrayed that disregard to appearances which is apt to be engendered by a compulsory sequestration from worshipful society. There is a slovenly, careless independence, acquired by being beneath censure as well as above it—a

free-and-easy recklessness, peculiar to ruined men, who despair of rising, and know that they cannot fall lower, which was strikingly exhibited by one of these individuals, and in a less marked manner by his companion, who had the air of being a foreigner. "Salve, et siste pedem," cried the former, around whose bonnet were fantastically arranged some nettle-leaves in the form of a wreath—"It may like you, amice mi, to understand that there are of all sorts in this same Sanctuary of Westminster.

'Some patches, some losels, some naughty packs
Some facers, some bracers, that make great cracks.'

Besides which, there be haskers and ribalds, dicers, carders, tumblers, rogues, and renegades, punks, and pussels—

'Brainless blinkards that blow at the coal,
Pole-hatchets that prate at every ale-pole,—'

mendici, mimæ, balatrones, et hoc genus omne. But, on the other hand, there be men of reverence and worship within these precincts, of

whom I myself, Heaven help the mark, am one; for I am the identical Johannes Skeltonus, Oxonii poeta laureatus; whom my friend Erasmus, in his epistle to our most noble King, entitleth 'Britannicarum literarum lumen et decus,'—whom his own pious propensities, (Eu! Euge! Papæ! Evax!) have procured to be made rector of Diss in Norfolk; and whom the monoculos, the Polypheme in the scarlet hat, the unit-eyed cardinal compelled (Heu! Eheu! Proh! Heimihi!) to swim into this sanctuary net of Saint Peter the fisherman, lest he should be caught, skinned and cut up, to tickle his eminency's most eminent palate."

"Though I have been a long dweller abroad," said Dudley, "I have not travelled so far but that the pithy, pleasant, and profitable works of Master Skelton, the laureate, have reached me."

"By Mary Gypsey, quod scripsi scripsi," continued the poet; "and as to my wreath, since Apollo's laurel would not screen me from the thunder of a butcher's son, I have given it the avaunt, and assumed the nettle as the fitter type, which, though it may enable me to sting

others, cannot be placed around my head without my harming my own fingers. Since death robbed me of Lily the Grammarian, my 'ass in præsenti,' as I was wont to name him, I have been fain to flog with my chaplet the mendicant friars, the Dominicans, and the red-hatted Lucifer, from whose clutches I was only saved by my good friend Abbot Islip, of Westminster, and the privilege of this hallowed verge, where we fear not the eaves-droppers—

'Leering and lurking here and there like spies,
The devil tear their tongues, and pick out their eyes.'

"Beshrew my own babbling tongue! If I begin quoting my doggrel rhymes, I shall never introduce to you my right worthy and learned friend Polydore Virgil, the Archdeacon of Wells; who is, for the time being, fain to do penance, by registering himself as a Sanctuarian."

From the personage thus introduced, and who, although a foreigner, proved to be of much more sober and discreet English speech than the poet, Dudley gathered that the better order of residents within the asylum, disclaiming com-

panionship with the rogues and ribalds that first assailed him, had formed a society or club among themselves, of which they invited him to become a member, and to celebrate his induction by dining with them that very day. To this invitation he had no sooner given a willing assent, than the Laureate exclaimed—"Then by Mahound and the mash-tub, per Jovem et Ædepòl, and by the bearded Bacchus himself, we will drink till the merry ale-sop do dance in the foretop, and quaff confusion to the butcher's dog that first brought me into this jeopardy, for

'Of no tyrant I read that did him exceed,
Neither yet Dioclesian, nor yet Domitian,
Nor yet crooked Cacus, nor yet drunken Bacchus,
Neither Phalery, rehearsed in Valery,
Nor Sardanapall, unhappiest of all,
Nor Nero the worst, nor Claudius the curst,
Neither Zerobbabel, nor cruel Jesabel,—
The Soldan nor the Turk wrought never such work,
For to let their hawks fly in the Church of Saint Sophy,'

as this colossus, with one foot on the throne and one upon the altar; to whom I have often wished as many sore crosses, "quot volucrum pennæ, quot sunt tormenta Gehennæ." And

so, Master Dudley, until noon, which is our hour of dinner, I give you well to fare, and 'Quot sunt virtutes, tot tibi mitto salutes.'"

So saying he sauntered away, leaning on the arm of his companion, and reciting to him a new philippic in his usual macaronic style, which he had just composed; while Dudley, whom neither his own misfortunes nor the bad example of the Laureate could betray into an oblivion of so important a duty as that of dress, arrayed himself in a new French suit, as if determined to astound the forlorn inmates of the Sanctuary, by the uncongenial freshness of his equipments.

Thus adorned, he betook himself, at the appointed hour, to the dinner-party, where he found the Laureate still decorated with his nettle-wreath, installed in the chair as the Symposiarch, to which office he had been elected by the suffrages of the guests. Of these, the greater number proved to be refugees from the vengeance of the different spiritual courts, which, with a laudable impartiality of persecution, were beginning to torment and burn all sects and all parties that had rendered them-

selves in any way obnoxious to their fluctuating fulminations. The religious world was in all the terror and confusion of a chaotic crisis; the rock of the old faith was reeling and sinking to the bottom; the new one had not yet acquired sufficient stability to afford a holdfast. In the midst of the storm some clung with desperation to the former; some grappled with a devoted energy to the latter; some were struggling and floating between the two; "and the roar and dashing of opinions loosened from their accustomed hold, might be heard like the noise of an angry sea."* Because the King had been dubbed the Defender of one faith, he seemed to consider himself authorized to propound as many more as he pleased; there was no security for liberty or life but in agreeing with the royal theologian, who inculcated his doctrine by the persuasions of the fagot and the reasonings of the halter; and whose own tenets varied with every change of policy, passion, or caprice. In this state of things the Sanctuary was sure to be crowded with pole-

* Hazlitt's Lectures, p. 15.

mical disputants, whose fanatical zeal being fostered by impunity, vented itself in furious, almost frantic, altercations of hourly occurrence, until the whole place resembled a spiritual arena, where the wild beasts in the shape of the different bigots and dogmatists, did their best to worry, and mangle, and tear one another to pieces.

Such were the wrathful wranglers whom the Laureate delighted, with a malicious joy, to set together by the ears, encouraging their Lapithæan strife, even at the festive board of their weekly meetings. Many, indeed, had enrolled themselves of the club for the purpose of promulging their peculiar theological notions, others to oppose what they conceived to be pestilent heresies, the poet to flout all parties; —often interrupting their profound discussions by gross and indecent buffoonery, by singing Anglo-Latin songs, which he had composed for the purpose of inflaming their dissensions, or by reciting some farcical extract from his own works. It was quite new to Dudley to find the guests more eager to discuss the most abs-

truse points of doctrine, than the savoury messes set before them, upon whose merits there could not be any difference of opinion;—to behold those who had met at the same table as presumed friends, instantly flying at one another's throat as infuriated controversialists; — to see the chairman, whose business it should have been to secure harmony, aggravating the respective disputants, embroiling more the fray by decision, and endeavouring to make the tenets of both parties equally ridiculous by the *reductio ad absurdum*.

Among the guests upon the present occasion, was a furious reformer, named Woodville, upon whom the Laureate had bestowed the nickname of the Mad Lutheran, and whose zeal, indeed, seemed to have completely got the better of his wits. Utterly regardless of the viands set before him, he was maintaining with a foaming energy, and a proportionate vehemence of gesticulation that "singing and saying of mass, matins, or evensong, is but roaring, howling, whistling, mumming, conjuring, and juggling; and the playing at the organs a foolish va-

nity;*" while a Romanist, on the other hand, with much more temper, but with an equal inflexibility of opinion, was upholding the ancient system, anticipating all sorts of mischief from the translation of the Bible,† and branding the professors of the new faith with contumelious terms, that seemed to make the blood of his opponent boil in his veins, until he exhibited a visible propensity to pugilistic argument, or to the use of such missile logic as came within his

* So it was declared in the "Seventy eight Fautes and Abuses of Religion in the Protestation of the Clargie of the lower House," within the province of Canterbury, presented to the King in 1536.

† The friends of ignorance, in those days, seem to have been as much horrified at the promulgation of the Scriptures, as they are in ours at the diffusion of education; and it is recorded of one individual, that he preferred suicide to witnessing such an abomination. Speaking of one *Purier* the Town Clerk of the city of London, Hall writes—"I myself heard him once saie to me, and other that wer by, swearing a great othe, that if he thought the kynge's highnes would set forth the Scripture in English, and let it be red of the people by his auctoritie, rather than he would so long live, he would cut his own throte; but he brake promes, for as you have hard, he hanged hymself; but of what mynde and intent he so did, God judge."—*Chronicles*, p. 806.

reach. This "last infirmity of noble minds," the chairman had no wish to encourage, well knowing, by experience, that these flying persuasives might hit other heads than those for which they were intended, and by no means anxious that the "Mad Lutheran" should reduce the skulls of the company to the same cracked condition as his own. "The master saw the madness rise," and to check its explosion, struck his hand violently upon the table, ejaculating, "Silence; ye stultiloquent brawlers—we are met, like honest friends and true topers, and sheltering from the storm under the same tree, to drink the three outs—ale out of the pot—money out of the pocket—wit out of the head; which is the established order of proceeding; whereas ye have begun with the last first, which is flat rebellion against your Symposiarch, who will throw his nettle-crown into the mouth of the next culprit thus offending. Non sum vates ille, de quo loquuntur mille? Am I not your bard, your Laureate, who has sworn to preserve harmony? Where be these truant minstrels? Strike up your

clarichords, virginals, clarions, shawms, organs, recorders, rebecks, and sackbuts. What! have we none to make the noisy air do trewage to our kingship? Then let the ear go starve: we will make music for the mouth, so rattle your cans, cups, and cruses, fill to the brim, bury your noses in the foam, and drink confusion to the Cardinal of St. Cecilia; the Archbishop of York; the Pope of the Legatine Court; the Bishop of Durham, Worcester, and Hereford; the Abbot of St. Alban's in commendam; and the Lord High Chancellor of England;—all which dignities one man can see to fulfill with one eye."

Most of the party being personally hostile to Wolsey, this toast produced a rare instance of accordance among them, being drunk with only two or three dissentient voices; when the chairman, anxious to prevent a relapse into an altercation, with which he saw Dudley to be already disgusted, declared that he would sing them a song upon Margaret his mistress, and would challenge every recreant that should afterwards refuse to drink her health in a

bumper. In compliance with this promise he sang, or rather chanted, the following irregular ditty:—

"Merry Margaret as midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon or hawk of the tower,
With solace and gladness,
Much mirth and no madness,
All good and no badness,
So joyously, so maidenly, so womanly,
Her demeaning, in every thing, far, far passing
What I can endite or suffice to write,
Of merry Margaret, as midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon or hawk of the tower.

As patient and still, and as full of good-will, as fair Isiphill,
Coliander, sweet pomander, good Cassander.
Steadfast of thought, well made, well wrought; far may be sought
Erst that ye can find so courteous, so kind,
As merry Margaret this midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon or hawk of the tower."

The health of his "midsummer flower" was quaffed with great cordiality: but the laureate was not Orpheus enough to tame the wild beasts by whom he was surrounded. Woodville, the crazy fanatic, sounded the trumpet of attack; others of his own persuasion joined

him; the sticklers for the ancient faith took up the gauntlet; and the poet, who had by this time imbibed enough of the Lambeth ale to deem it high sport to fan the flames of dissension, alternately supported both parties, until there was every appearance of a fierce and general engagement. Amid such combatants, inflamed at once with bigotry and beer, Dudley felt no disposition to enrol himself, and he accordingly withdrew to his own lodgings, resolved to decline the proffered honour of belonging to the club, and to keep himself as much aloof as possible from the disputatious sanctuarians, who, in addition to their other demerits, seemed to have an alarming propensity for thread-bare and old-fashioned garments.

On the following morning, Pierre brought him the goods and chattels which had been left at his temporary apartments by the Strand Bridge, together with an earnest offer of her further services from the benevolent lady.

"Why, how now, Pierre?" said Dudley, as he observed him in an expression of unaccustomed

seriousness, which sate as grotesquely upon his features, as if a buffoon were to attempt a rueful aspect while looking through a comic mask. "Art thou down-hearted to be safe in sanctuary, thou who couldst sing a song when thou wert up to the chin in Arthur's slough?"

"Eh, dame! monsieur," replied Pierre—*ce n'etoit que moi alors*—it was only myself then; and we Frenchmen, *nous autres François*, we don't mind these things. But monsieur is an Englishman; they cannot bear reverses; they hang or drown themselves where we should only sing a song; it makes one *triste* even to see them in trouble: cord is cheap, the river is very near, and if any thing were to happen to monsieur——"

Here he shrugged up his shoulders and his eyebrows, expanded his hands, drew in his breath with a shuddering hiss, and stood in an attitude of profound horror, until his master exclaimed with a burst of laughter—"Was I such a poltroon, then, in fighting against your

countrymen in France, that I should hang or drown myself the moment I get into trouble in London?"

"But the English," said Pierre, still shaking his head distrustingly, "fight against all the world much better than against themselves."

"Perhaps so; but I promise you, my good Pierre, that I am neither going to pop my head into a noose, nor under water. On the contrary, it is my intention to be more than usually gay, and to laugh the more heartily, the more fortune frowns upon me."

"*Aha! c'est tout autre chose,*" exclaimed Pierre, suddenly resuming his comic looks, and clapping his hands, "*Bon! bon! Eh Palsangué Pierrot, boutte bas ton chagrin.* Morbleu! we will be as merry as crickets now we have fallen into misfortunes."

Snapping his fingers, and recommencing his song, he skipped and danced out of the room, returning presently after with the breakfast, which he held at arm's length, with his head up in the air, while he shouted with prodigious energy and emphasis—"*Colin mangeant des*

artichaux;" and during the remainder of the day continued to play the changes upon his different ditties, giving an intermission to his tongue only when he occasionally exercised his heels.

Being now settled, with some degree of comfort, in his new lodgings, which commanded a view of the river, Dudley wrote to Sir John at the Tower, apologizing for the momentary arrest to which he had been exposed by the identity of their names, and requesting that he would call upon him in the sanctuary, and advise with him how he might best disabuse the Cardinal of the prejudices he had conceived against him. For several days he received no answer, but at length the following reply was put into his hands:—

"These from the Tower, where it jumps well with my humour to remain as master of the armoury, but where my friend, Jack Dudley, warns me it might be passing perilous to be impounded as the prisoner of Sir William Kingston, the lieutenant. Lookee, coz, thou hast cozened me once, by suffering me to be

arrested for thee and carried before the lords of the Star-chamber, even in the very crisis of a French ragout, of whose surpassing merits I had obtained little better than olfactory evidence. A pitiful parting, not from thee, but the ragout; but let that pass.—Harkee, coz, we have now cozened one another for the last time; and henceforward we are neither kith nor kin. Slid, did I not tell thee, that if my dearest friend got into jeopardy or a gaol, I should stay at home, and keep company with Jack Dudley? Thou art now in both, and wouldst thou have me give myself the lie in the very teeth? My good master and patron, the lord cardinal, whose unheard speech thou wert dotterel enough not to laud, stands, as I am well apprised, under the cold look of our bluff King, which threatens to disgrace and banish him: and though I owe him my post, and all I possess, I make myself a stranger to his presence, by advice of my friend Jack Dudley, until I see whether it be more gainful to open my mouth and bark for him, or against him; whilst thou, to whom I owe nothing but an

arrest, invitest me to be of thy counsel in the sanctuary! Verily, thou art a hopeful namesake, and a modest!—Once more, I tell thee, it is my purpose to be buried with my head on—therefore I fish not in troubled waters; and therefore I desire no more of thy tidings till thou art riding upwards upon Fortune's wheel, when thou shalt have my signature, which I now deem it prudent to withhold; and shalt find me once more thy staunch friend, well-willer, and kinsman."

"Verily," said Dudley to himself, as he indignantly tore up the letter; "thou art the most jaunty, debonair, and nonchalant of all cold and careful calculators; and if to have a bad heart is to be a good courtier, by my faith thou art a made man."

It was obvious that no further assistance was to be expected in this quarter; he disdained, indeed, to think of it, after such a cavalier renouncement; resolving to trust to the operations of his lawyer, for procuring the downfal of Sir Lionel, which would of course insure his own emancipation; and in the mean while, to

beguile the time as well as he might by such recreations as the nature of the place allowed. In pursuance of this resolution, he formed acquaintance with one or two of his neighbours, ventured out at night into the town, and in the morning generally had an interview with his legal agent, from whom he learnt, with infinite satisfaction, the departure of the commissioners for the Tor House. Their acknowledged talents and unimpeachable character gave him a full assurance of success. He entertained not a doubt that Cecil would be formally re-instated in his rights; that Sir Lionel would be brought to judgment for his misdeeds; and it was with a proportionate dismay that he learnt the utter disappointment of all his hopes. The lawyer shook his head, reminding him that he had said from the first there was no use in contending with such an admirable and wonderful man as Sir Lionel, who had nearly obtained an exclusive command of the perjury-market; and earnestly recommended him not to quit the sanctuary upon any account, as his adversary would be more formidable than ever; while the Cardinal, who

conceived himself to have been misled by false statements of Cecil's sanity, had expressed himself very angrily upon the subject, and might now be considered his enemy, as well as the King of the Hill.

From all apprehensions upon the Cardinal's score, he was soon after relieved by the disgrace and death of that distinguished prelate; and as he had himself now abandoned all proceedings on Cecil's behalf, taking it for granted, by the report of the commissioners, that he was decidedly lunatic, although he had happened to encounter him in two or three lucid intervals, he trusted that Sir Lionel would cease to persecute him with false charges, for which there was no longer the same motive as before. In this expectation the lawyer could not by any means coincide with him; revenge, he said, was a sufficient impulse to that great, that illustrious man, who rarely abandoned a design that he had once entertained, or forgot an enemy that he had once resolved to ruin, on which account he strenuously dissuaded his client from quitting the sanctuary. In conformity with this advice,

Dudley remained there some time longer; but seeing no reason to conclude that his adversary meant to press the charges which he had registered against him in the different courts, and growing weary of the restraint, as well as of the sorry companionship of the sanctuary, he had just made up his mind to quit it at all risks, when an event occurred which not only withdrew him from the asylum he had chosen, but procured him a protector, against whom not even the all-defying Sir Lionel would dare to raise his finger.

St. James's Hospital, which was in the custody of Eton College, having been recently exchanged with the King for the living of Chattisham, in Suffolk, the monarch had ordered the ancient building to be pulled down; and enclosing the swampy meadows that surrounded it, for the purpose of forming a park, had begun the construction of the present Palace of St. James's. On his return from an excursion up the river, he landed near Westminster Abbey, intending to walk through the new enclosures, and examine what progress the workmen had

made in the edifice. With his customary impatience he set off almost alone, without awaiting the disembarking of the serjeants-at-arms who had accompanied him; and he had no sooner entered the verge, than the sanctuary-men collecting in considerable numbers to view the gallant show of the royal barges, pressed tumultuously around him, falling upon their knees, and stopping his progress, while they clamorously called for mercy and pardon. Among the spectators immediately about his person, was Woodville, "the mad Lutheran," whose over-boiling zeal had by this time begun to make such sad derangement of his intellects, as to justify the title which the Laureate had fixed upon him by anticipation. According to his distempered notions, the King had been recently exhibiting symptoms of backsliding in the great work of the Reformation, and of returning to all the scarlet heresies of Rome.

Several Protestants had indeed been recently executed for wishing to travel faster than the royal theologian, a persecution which had irritated the mind of the fiery and fanatical Wood-

ville into a delirium of wrath. Interpreting his own fury into a divine call, that he should become the champion of the oppressed Protestants, and imagining the King to have been brought thither by the hand of Heaven, that he might be warned from the error of his ways, he suddenly lifted up his voice, and with a loud and solemn energy threatened him with the wrath of God if he continued to sacrifice his chosen people, reminding him how the Israelites had been freed from the tyranny of Eglon, the Moabite, by the hands of Ehud, whom the Lord had commanded to plunge a dagger into the King's side. Either in an unconscious adjustment of his action to his words, or for the purpose of rendering his warning more impressive in the King's eyes, he snatched a dagger from beneath his cloak, and was brandishing it menacingly in the air, when Dudley, who came up at that moment, and who really thought that he was about to attempt an assassination, leapt over two or three of the kneeling men, and struck him to the earth with a blow.

In the same instant he saw that it was the

crazy Woodville, whom he had not before recognized; and when the King, starting back, exclaimed—"Ha! how! what villanous traitor is this?" Dudley fell upon one knee and replied,—"So please your highness, it is an unfortunate madman whose name is Woodville." Several of the sanctuary-men confirmed this statement by crying out—"The mad Lutheran! the mad Lutheran!" and a party of the serjeants-at-arms and gentlemen-ushers having now run hastily up, the King, after fiercely rebuking them for their tardiness, ordered some of them to seize the caitiff, carry him to one of the barges, and have him conveyed to the Tower; then turning towards the sanctuary-men, who still remained upon their knees, he exclaimed in a furious voice, and with flashing eyes—"Avaunt! ye ruffian crew! ye knaves and beasts! ye scum! ye filth! ye felons! or by St. Paul, my guard shall cut a way through ye with their halberds." Dudley was retiring with some indignation, in obedience to his uncourteous order, when the King spying him, called out—"What ho, man, stop! art thou the fel-

low that knocked the villain down? Now, marry, thou art a tall man, and a proper, and I warrant me, not of the sanctuary. Who art thou? speak!"

In as few words as possible, Dudley stated his name, and the cause of his being compelled to take sanctuary, adding that all the charges against him were false and malicious, that he had been fighting the King's battles in France, and not without good approof, ever since he was a boy, and that he desired no better honour than to be again allowed to peril his life in the same cause. "Ha! sayest thou so?" cried the King, who was struck with his appearance, and who was as sudden in his capricious attachments as in his dislikes—"the Dudleys were ever a true and loyal race; thou hast done me good service in knocking down yonder mad and beastly traitor; I forgive thee that of which thine enemies would attaint thee; and he that wags but his finger against thee, after I have said the word, by St. Paul, he shall have cold steel atween his head and shoulders ere he be three days older. What! ha!"—He looked fiercely

round upon his attendants and companions, who had now come up, as if to ask whether any of them dared to question his will in this matter, but as they all preserved a respectful silence, he continued in a more placable tone—"Harkee, man, come to the palace of Bridewell to-morrow, and ask for Harry Fitzalan—for the Earl of Arundel, I mean, the Lord Chamberlain—I would have speech of thee."—He then waved his hand for Dudley to retire, a hint which was instantly obeyed, and the sanctuary-men having been all cleared away by the serjeant-at-arms, the King crossed over into the newly-inclosed meadows, and pursued his course towards St. James's.

Dudley felt too deeply the importance of securing the royal favour not to be punctual in obeying the order he had received, and knowing the monarch's predilection for personal splendour in the appearance of those that surrounded him, he failed not to attire himself in a French suit, which at once set off his fine figure to the best advantage, and afforded no mean evidence of his taste and regardlessness of expense. Thus

equipped he took boat, and landing at Bridewell, proceeded towards the Palace, which had been hastily rebuilt, a few years before, for the reception of the Emperor, Charles V., when he visited England. Its numerous peaked and painted tops, surmounted with the royal animals holding gilt fanes, such as the lion, the antelope, the dragon, the greyhound, and the dun cow, together with the general slightness and freshness of the edifice, contrasted strongly with the adjoining church, a venerable and solid structure, the massy gates and walls of which were built with the stones of the old castle, that once stood on the banks of the little river Fleet. Entering the great quadrangle, Dudley inquired for the apartments of the Lord Chamberlain, to which he was escorted; but on obtaining access to that officer, and stating his name, his lordship declared he had received no orders respecting him. He offered, however, to mention his arrival to the King, who had just finished dictating some dispatches, and was expected shortly to embark for his royal manor of Greenwich, where he had ordered a banquet to

be provided, and had commanded guests to be invited.

Departing for this purpose, he returned after a short delay, and desiring Dudley to follow him, conducted him to a large apartment hung with arras, at the lower end of which stood a band of the knights and esquires of the body, with the pensioners, gentlemen-ushers, and others, whom they passed, and proceeded to the further extremity of the chamber, where, behind a traverse,* the King was seated at a table, earnestly examining some drawings and plans, the purport of which was occasionally explained by a heavy coarse-looking personage, wearing the appearance of a foreigner, and standing at his side. The latter was the celebrated artist, Hans Holbein, who, upon recommendation of Sir Thomas More, had been taken into the King's service with a salary of 200 florins; and the drawings were designs for a beautiful gate to be erected at Whitehall, which had now fallen into the King's possession by the for-

* A traverse was a retired seat with lattice-work and a curtain.

feiture of Wolsey.* Amidst all his sensuality and cruelty, Henry had a strong attachment for the arts, more particularly those of architecture and painting, and although he noticed, by a glance, the arrival of the Lord Chamberlain and his companion, his eyes immediately reverted to the papers before him, on which he continued to pore very attentively, suggesting from time to time various alterations and improvements, in the propriety of which the prudent artist took good care to acquiesce. During all this time the Lord Chamberlain and Dudley remained upon their knees; but the King had no sooner settled the design for the gate, and dismissed the painter, than he ordered them to arise, exclaiming, as he surveyed Dudley—"Ho! man! thou art come, art thou? marry, thou art a proper fellow, and of a presence that likes me well. How sayest thou? What! jumps it with thy humour to become one of our gentlemen-ushers, till time and thy good

* This fine specimen of Holbein's taste is engraved in the Vetusta Monumenta, plate xvii.

deserts may better enable us to provide for thee! Ha?"

Though Dudley was placed by his circumstances far above the necessity of seeking a provision in the court, he was most anxious to obtain the King's protection against the perilous machinations of Sir Lionel; and he accordingly declared, as he again dropped upon one knee, that he should deem it his highest honour to be allowed to serve his grace in whatever station might be appointed to him.

"Lookee, my Lord of Arundel," said the King—"this is a Dudley, and of gentle blood; it was he who struck down the beastly madman yesterday;—it likes me to have such about me as have quick eyes and quicker hands; that wait not for a word, but can catch a look; and whose limbs are as nimble as their thoughts, when they see aught that jeopards their master; so let him be sworn my liegeman of life and limb, and possess him of his duty as a gentleman-usher. Away!"

He motioned with his hand a signal of im-

patience, which it was never safe to disregard, and they accordingly withdrew, the Lord Chamberlain only signifying his acquiescence in the royal commands, by a low bow.

Scarcely had they quitted the traverse, when the King hastily issued from it with the drawings in his hand, and stamping his foot, exclaimed. "What, ho! gentlemen, are ye deaf? is there nobody in attendance? Where be these laggard yeomen? Call back the German painter—is he gone? What! are the yeomen of the barge in readiness? then quick, sirs, quick; the time presses. For Greenwich, ho!—for Greenwich!" So saying, he passed forth from the apartment, followed by his numerous attendants. Holbein, who had been hastily recalled, joined him in the ante-room, and accompanied him into his barge, where he had hardly seated himself, when the King again began to study the drawings in his hand. So little could his impetuous temperament brook delay, whatever might be the caprice of the moment, that instead of proceeding to Greenwich, he ordered the bargemen to row him to Whitehall, that he

might immediately settle the locality of the new gate, and give orders for its erection. Here he remained so long in discussion with Holbein, that the time and tide, which would not stay even for King Henry the Eighth, rendered his proceeding to Greenwich impossible; and he accordingly dispatched a messenger thither on horseback, to inform the guests that he had changed his mind, and to command their attendance for the following day.

CHAPTER VI.

A court-corrupted slave thou art!
What! is her name upon thy heart
So slightly graven,
That, trembling at a tyrant's frown,
Thou canst renounce her for thine own?
O faithless craven!

Dudley in the mean while receiving instructions from the Lord Chamberlain as to his duty as a gentleman-usher, was informed that it was incumbent on him to be every night in his pallet, unless he had special license to the contrary; that he was to attend in rotation at dinner and supper to see that the squires of the body served the King's pottage, and every night at eight o'clock, after supper, to make the King's cupboard; to take orders in the morning where his grace would hear mass, and provide

a stool, carpet, and cushions for the same; to command a knight to go with him to the ewery-board when the King took his meals, to receive the towel and water, and see that assays be taken thereof; to call the yeomen to take the King's board and tressels away; to learn his highness's mind whether it shall please him to have any heralds, minstrels, or such other, to come into his presence; to forbid that no manner of man do set any dish upon the King's bed, for fear of hurting the rich counterpoints, and that no man wipe or rub his hands upon the King's arras, whereby it might be hurted; and that no man, whatsoever be his degree, be so hardy as to nigh the King's chair, nor stand under the cloth of estate, nor lean upon the King's bed, nor approach the cupboard where the King's cushion is laid, nor stand upon the carpet, but that all stand down at the lower end of the chamber as nigh as they can, and so withdraw them when the King speaks with any lord or gentleman; to record all manner of bread, ale, wine, and stocks of trenchers spent in the King's chamber, and to

certify it into the King's counting-house;—if there come any honourable persons to the King to take them to the cellar, pantry, or buttery, and there to command such bread, meat, and drink as he shall think fit; and this in no wise to be withsaid: it is the King's honour: and at eight o'clock to call for a torch for all night, and to go to the buttery for the King's ale, there to receive three cups of ash and ale, giving assay thereof; so to the cellar to receive the cup, a cupboard-cloth, and two pots of wine for the King, giving assay thereof;—then to the groom-porters, there to receive a mortar of wax, seventeen sizes, and a pricket for the King. And this done, all to come into the King's great chamber, commanding a yeoman of the watch to keep the chamber-door, removing all others except the knights, squires of the body, and the watch; and so then to draw the traverse.

Such was an outline of the duty which the gentlemen-ushers were expected to discharge in rotation, and with respect to the making of the King's bed, which he would be occasionally

called upon to superintend, it was considered an office of such consequence, that he was furnished with printed directions for his guidance. From this paper, which was of considerable length, we shall make a few extracts, for the benefit of such chamberlains and chambermaids of the present day as may wish to know how their functions were performed in the palace of Henry the Eighth.

"First, a groom or a page to take a torch, and go to the wardrobe of the King's beds, and bring them of the wardrobe, with the King's stuff, into the chamber for making of the bed; whereas ought to be a gentleman-usher, four yeomen of the chamber for the making of the said bed, the groom to stand at the bed's feet with his torch, the gentleman-usher apart, commanding them what they shall do; a yeoman with a dagger to search the straw of the King's bed, that there be none untruth therein; and then these yeomen to cast the bed of down upon that, and one of them to tumble over it for the search thereof. Then they to beat and toss the said bed, and to lay on then the bolster.

without touching of the bed whereas it ought to lye. Then they of the wardrobe to deliver them a fustian, taking assay thereof." (Here follow minute directions for the laying of each sheet and fustian, as well as of the pillows, bolster, and head sheet.)—"And then the said wardrober to deliver unto the yeomen two little small pillows, wherewithal the gentleman-usher shall give the assay to the wardrober, and to the yeomen which have laid hands upon the said beds. And then the said two yeomen to lay up the said bed towards the bolster, as it was before, they making a cross, and kissing where their hands were. And so then every of them to stick up the angels about the bed, and to let down the curtains. Item, a squire for the body, or a gentleman-usher, ought to set the King's sword at his bed's head."*

Apologizing to such of our readers as feel no interest in these cubiculary details, we proceed to state that Dudley soon qualified himself for

* The whole may be found, as well as the duties of a gentleman-usher, in the Antiquarian Repertory, vol. ii. pp. 188 and 206.

his new office, and discharged its duties with an alacrity, which combined with his personal comeliness, and the rich elegance of his dress, two recommendations that always found favour in Henry's sight, procured him on several occasions the approving notice of the monarch. Although this condescension never extended beyond an exclamation of—"Ha! it is well. Marry, thou art a fellow of mark and likelihood. What!" Yet coming from a sovereign who was ever more peremptory than gracious, even in his commendations, it was interpreted by the courtiers as a certain prelude to his advancement; and their deference augmented in an exact ratio with the increase of these royal tributes to his merit. Dudley himself began to think highly of his own prospects, when, in about three weeks after his arrival at Court, Sir John unexpectedly entered his room, and running up to him with all the familiarity of an old and staunch friend, shook him heartily by the hand, exclaiming,—"Mine honest coz, my most worshipful kith and kin, by Gad's lid, I am right glad to see your hopes budding and blowing in the sunshine

of the King's eye. I am come to redeem my pledge, for in these matters my conscience is somewhat squeamish and fastidious. Said I not, that when you were riding upwards upon fortune's wheel you should have my hand, and find me your well-willer, your beadsman, your life-and-limb friend; and think you I am the man to flinch from such a solemn pledge? not I, forsooth, for my counsellor, Jack Dudley, whispers me that I were an arrant knave and a fool, and a blind buzzard, which is worse, did I not assure my worthy cousin, Poyns Dudley, Esquire, Gentleman-Usher to the King, and standing well in his favour, that I am his slave, his Pythias, his alter-et-idem, his bondsman, and his sworn brother." Taking Dudley's hand in both of his own, he pressed it tenderly to his heart, at the same time looking in his face with such an expression of burlesque sincerity, that his kinsman, who knew there was no use in being offended, burst out a-laughing, and made him a low bow of acknowledgment.

Sir John, indeed, was not one of those with whom it was easy to be angry. His total

want of principle, his hollow and heartless selfishness, were, with very few exceptions, common to the whole court of Henry, perhaps characteristic of the age; but the frankness with which he avowed them, at least exculpated him, in one respect, from the charge of hypocrisy; while there was something so amusing in his cheerful epicurism, vivacious worldliness, and calculating levity, that those who had once enjoyed his society, could seldom forego it without regret. Though he knew he could never depend upon him as a friend, Dudley was not sorry to renew his acquaintanceship with so merry a companion, into whose present prospects he inquired, and asked whether he still retained his situation in the Tower.

"Ay, marry, do I," said Sir John, "and a better one to boot. Body o' me! if I ever become noble, it will be by means of churl's children; for I no sooner saw that my old patron, the butcher's son, was going down the hill, than I attached myself to a blacksmith's son, who was rising up to eclipse him in the royal favour; and I am now in the service of Sir

Thomas Cromwell, the principal secretary of state, who goes daily to the King's closet, and has the command of his ear. This, let me tell you, cousin mine, is a better post than the governorship of Calais; and if my friend, Jack Dudley, do not play me false, nor the headsman's axe rob me of my patron, I shall climb up the steps of preferment, till I am enabled to kick down the ladder by which I rose, and nail myself to the topmost spoke of fortune's wheel. Howbeit, coz, it behoves me to be wary which way I climb, for though I reverence a dutiful son, I am so far from wishing to follow my father's example, that I am sworn to die with my head on. And you, my most dear and esteemed kith-and-kinsman, how marches your old quarrel with the fearful Flibbertigibbet, the Mahound; the doughty Hycke-Scorner, the Sir Beelzebub of the Tor Hill?"

Dudley stated the delusion under which he laboured, with respect to Cecil's supposed sanity, and expressed his hope that as he had himself dropped all prosecution of his cousin's claims, Sir Lionel would equally resign his hos-

tile purposes, especially as he was now under the royal protection. Sir John remained nearly the whole morning detailing all the news and scandal of the court, and thus was an acquaintanceship renewed, which soon ripened into a considerable intimacy, although the motives to the intercourse, which were the desire of amusement on one side, and the hope of advancement on the other, would not allow it to be dignified with the name of friendship.

On the day following this interview, there was a banquet and ball in the Lord Chamberlain's apartments, to which Dudley was invited, and where, to his no small astonishment, he encountered Beatrice, of whose residence in the palace he had been previously uninformed. Her surprise equalled his own; for Sir Lionel had told her that he had been compelled to take refuge in the sanctuary, under charges of a treasonable nature; though he had forgotten to add that they all emanated from himself. Dudley's presence in the court, and the office he held, sufficiently attested that he had been cleared from these imputations, a cir-

cumstance upon which she congratulated him with the greatest earnestness; and as he did not choose to criminate her father, by stating his share in these false accusations, there was nothing to interrupt the perfect cordiality of their meeting. Both parties, indeed, abstained from all mention of Sir Lionel; Dudley, from feelings of delicacy, Beatrice from a sense of shame, for she felt that his conduct had been violent and unwarrantable. They danced together, and quickly renewed those kindly feelings, which had been so abruptly checked by the occurrences at the Tor House. Dudley could not forget that she had been the preserver of his life; that stately presence and magnificence of attire, which had first won his admiration, shone with undiminished splendour, even amid the galaxy of all the court-beauties; while the hauteur of her carriage and demeanour appeared to be considerably softened,—a circumstance which he attributed to the necessity of her evincing a comparative condescension in her attendance upon the Queen. They had now frequent opportunities of meet-

ing at the court-parties, in which this intimacy increased ; and Dudley, who imagined that there would be no difficulty in reconciling Sir Lionel to the match, now that he had abandoned all proceedings in Cecil's behalf, so far constituted himself her professed admirer, as to be called by the courtiers her *servant* ;—a personage who, according to the then established code of gallantry, was privileged to divide his mistress's attention with her spaniel ; to send her presents and amatory verses, emblems and devices ; in short, to express his passion, and make an offer of his hand, in every sort of language except plain English.

The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt, imitating the example of Petrarch, had indeed at this period introduced the fashion of a platonic love, which, without aspiring to an union with its object, mimicked, with a fictitious fervour, all the ardour of a real passion. The first of these distinguished poets was content to celebrate an unknown beauty, under the name of the fair Geraldine ; the second was supposed to have shadowed forth Anna Boleyn in his ama-

tory effusions; but there were some who avowedly cultivated a metaphysical passion for an imaginary nymph, and hugged, and tossed, and dandled this puppet of the brain, with all the vain fondness of a child caressing its doll. Even where the attentions of the gallants were directed towards a living object, it was difficult to assign a definite character to their devoirs; to say whether they originated in that male coquetry which was fashionable among the flutterers of the day, or whether they were to be considered as preludes to an honest and unequivocal declaration of love.

Such precisely was the difficulty in which Beatrice found herself placed with respect to Dudley. Now that he filled an honourable station at Court, and was daily rising in the King's favour, she had no reason to conclude that her father would refuse his sanction to their marriage; and although from her own altered views, since her arrival at Court, she no longer contemplated many points in his character with the same admiration as formerly, her memory supplied much that was wanting to her heart; for

she retained towards him all that tender predilection which a woman seldom loses for the man who first succeeded in awakening the dormant sympathies of her bosom, and more especially where she has been the preserver of his life.

Dudley himself had hardly made up his own mind. Although not habitually indecisive, he had a tendency to procrastination—a desire to defer every thing, especially if its execution were attended with a departure from the customary routine of his life and his enjoyments. Although he had long since inflexibly resolved not to fulfil the contract with Miss Poyns, and never to revisit the live machines of Beckhampton Hall, he had not yet written the letter which was to release his affianced wife from her engagement, and leave her at liberty to marry any man, who might have less objection than himself to an automatical spouse. In addition to this besetting sin, which neither allowed him to discard one mistress nor to secure another, there was an attraction to his mind in continuing to be in the fashion, of which he was always an ardent admirer,—in being an understood and

yet an undeclared lover:—in swelling the train of such modish triflers with Cupid as the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt.

Such were the circumstances that occasioned him to toy and dally with his passion, until an event occurred which brought his intercourse with Beatrice to an abrupt and angry conclusion. The capricious Henry had grown tired of Anna Boleyn, and had secretly resolved upon her destruction; his passion for Jane Seymour had not hitherto extended beyond a few scrutinizing glances; and in this inter-regnum of his amorous desires, he cast his eyes upon Beatrice as she was dancing at a Court-ball banquet—a recreation in which she excelled, and which set off her fine figure to the best advantage. He had been struck with her when he first encountered her at the Tor House; other thoughts and pursuits had since driven her from his mind; but this rebound of his first admiration proved stronger than the original impulsion. She was precisely that order of beauty which he had always admired,—a large, stately, and alluring figure, embellished by a tasteful richness of

attire;—his heart, or rather his senses were at the present moment unoccupied; and he suffered his imagination to brood upon the charms he had been contemplating, until he fancied himself to be vehemently in love. Opposition to his desires, or even delay in their gratification, was not to be brooked, and he accordingly determined to seek her as his mistress, an honour which, he doubted not, would be duly appreciated, and eagerly coveted by one whose father was of illegitimate birth, and whose mother's connexions neither noticed nor recognized her. From the inquiries he instituted, he learnt that Dudley was her declared *servant*, and it was, therefore, necessary to apprise him, in the first instance, that he was not to presume to go any further in the affair, nor on any account to make her an offer of his hand.

At this time the Court was residing at Whitehall, and it was Dudley's turn of duty to superintend the night-watch stationed in the King's great chamber, which formed a spacious vestibule to his bed-room. The monarch had long retired to rest; Dudley, by the light of a great

torch stuck up in the centre of the room, had been reading Aretino's Satires, which he closed and put in his pocket on hearing great Tom of Westminster strike the hour of midnight. On looking round the room, he discovered that he was the only person awake;—the knights and squires of the body were stretched upon their straw pallets;—the yeomen of the guard, having laid their halberds and drawn swords upon the ground, were slumbering at their posts, the light of the torch resting with a steady gleam upon their half-armour, or flashing fitfully, as they occasionally made some small and unconscious change in their posture. It is well, thought Dudley to himself, that the sentinels without are more upon the alert, for he heard them relieving guard, and caught the measured tread of their footsteps as they marched across the paved court-yard. As he still listened to the diminishing echoes of their feet, another sound reached his ear;—it was the King coughing in his bed-room, and presently after he heard him call out impatiently—"What, ho! who waits without?"

It was his first impulse to awaken the guard, or some of the knights of the body, none of whom had heard the call; but knowing the King's impatience, and anticipating his fury, should he discover that they had been sleeping at their posts, he hastily glided behind the traverse, and putting his mouth to the door of the privy chamber, exclaimed: "Did your highness call?"

"Who art thou, fellow? what is thy name?" was the reply.

"I am Poyns Dudley, one of your grace's ushers, so please you."

"Ha! is it thou? What! come in—I would have speech of thee."

After having heard the monarch pull a string that drew up a bolt, Dudley opened the door, entered the royal bedchamber; the door closed of itself; and the bolt dropped down again into its socket. Two large wax tapers, on a marble table, diffused a strong light through the room, irradiating the gilt angels with which the bed was decorated; and giving their benignant features the full benefit of a contrast with the royal

physiognomy. Before this period, Henry had commanded all persons at court to cut their hair short, of which fashion he set them the example; at the same time suffering his beard to grow, and wearing it knotted. By a long course of sensual indulgence, his body had begun to grow unwieldy, and his face to be bloated and distended, until the pendent and swollen jowl might almost have been termed a dewlap; while his features wore that look of moral intoxication, which is invariably superinduced by a long continued and intemperate gratification of the will. They expressed disease, as well as peevishness and impatience; offering an instructive evidence that Nature will not suffer either the appetites or the will to be abused, without entailing his own punishment upon the transgressor. It was impossible to look at him for a moment, without seeing that the animal propensities had been allowed to preponderate over the intellectual, until his personal appearance had sympathized with his pursuits: it was evident that his soul had begun to embody and embrute. At the present moment

his countenance exhibited an additional degree of irritation, on account of his attendants having placed his drink beyond his reach; while his appearance was more than usually grim and menacing from the night-gear in which he was arrayed; and from his having laid his hand, perhaps unconsciously, upon the hilt of the sword at the head of his bed.

Such was the figure who, after having pronounced an angry malison upon the groom, who had placed his drink so far off, commanded Dudley to hand it to him, inquiring, at the same time, whether he had seen assay taken of the cup. An answer being given in the affirmative, he was ordered to assay it himself, in compliance with which he drank a small portion of the wine, and then handed the cup to the King, who emptied its contents at a draught. Appearing to be somewhat pacified by this deep potation, he continued in a lower and less imperious voice—"come nearer to me, man! nearer still; what! Harkee, Sir, thou art of acquaintance with yonder girl of Somersetshire—

one of the Queen's ladies—the daughter of Bastard Fitzmaurice."

Dudley bowed his head in token of acquiescence; but the King, offended with this mute acknowledgment, impetuously exclaimed, "Dost thou not hear me, Sir? Ha!"

"I had the honour of making acquaintance with Mistress Fitzmaurice in her father's house, so please your grace," said Dudley, again bowing.

"Then mark me, Sir; mark me well, and do as I shall bid thee. Deliver unto her these baubles." From a small pocket at the head of his bed he took a favourite ring, painted in enamel by Holbein, with a representation of the battle of Bosworth; together with a carcanet of rich jewels, which he put into Dudley's hand, and continued—"Tell her that the King stands well affected towards her, that he admires her charms,—that it is his purpose to promote and honour her—and that if she prove buxom and obedient to his will, she may have an establishment and a pension, and not less honourable entreatment than was shown to the

Lady Talboys.* And mark me well, Sir, I will have no passages of courtship shown to her from any other man: not a word—not a breath —not a look—or, by St. Paul, his head shall fly from his shoulders. Dost thou hear me? Ha! What!"

"I do, so please your highness, and am in all things bound to obey your grace's orders."

"It is well, Sir; so shalt thou find favour and reward. Begone! and let me have speech of thee to-morrow. Away! Ha!"

Dudley bowed and retired, the bolt was raised, he opened the door, it closed behind him, and he again found himself in the ante-room, none of whose inmates appeared to have been disturbed by a conversation which had made such a sudden alteration in his prospects, and imposed upon him an office that was utterly repugnant to his feelings. Aretino's Satires were no longer consulted, and yet he felt little disposition to sleep, his thoughts being too busily ab-

* The King's former mistress, by whom he had Henry Fitzroy, created Duke of Richmond and Somerset.

sorbed in the consideration of what conduct it became him to pursue in this perilous emergency. He was, as we have formerly stated, a stranger to personal fear, under all the ordinary presentments of danger. He was a professed and successful duellist; he had killed three adversaries, and would cheerfully have encountered as many more, upon a question of a feather or a straw. He possessed, in short, a bravery which was partly constitutional, partly acquired in the exercise of his profession, partly excited by the fear of being thought a coward: but to that high, moral courage which impels a man, when he is called upon by duty, to encounter disgrace or death without flinching;—which leads him to disdain life when it can only be purchased by the sacrifice of a principle;—to this, the only true and noble intrepidity, Dudley was a stranger. He might have obtained the conqueror's wreath, but he would never have aspired to the crown of martyrdom. His residence, too, in so slavish and degraded a court, and more especially his intimacy with Sir John, had already tended to corrupt his

notions; while his experience of the remorseless cruelty, with which Henry destroyed all those who opposed themselves to the execution of his desires, convinced him that his life was at hazard if he boggled in the performance of his commission, and intimidated him from either asserting his own rights and wishes, or consulting the feelings of Beatrice.

Once determined by these ignoble considerations to obey the orders of his royal master, he soon found a thousand plausible justifications of his submission; for the mind is a subtle sophister in vindicating its own aberrations, and making the reason a pandar to the will. His official oath bound him to do his master's bidding; he had never committed himself to Beatrice by any irreclaimable pledge or declaration; his attachment to her was not of that nature, which should be put in competition with his loyalty, or allowed to endanger his existence. True, she had upon one occasion saved his life;—true, he had constituted himself her professed admirer and servant; but the former was the involuntary impulse of a moment, which would have

been equally elicited by any other person in similar jeopardy; the latter was the mere declaration of a preference which he was bound to abandon when his royal master became his rival, and which it was possible that Beatrice herself might be glad to forget, when she had a monarch for a suitor.

Determined by these futile arguments to become as pusillanimous as the rest of his brother-courtiers, he put the rich jewels in his pocket, and proceeded on the following morning to Beatrice's apartment, hoping as he went that she might afford him an excuse for his own conduct, by evincing a disposition to listen to the King's overtures. With this view he placed the splendid ring upon the table, and displayed the gorgeous carcanet in its most tempting form, before he prepared himself to deliver his message. All the hopes, however, that he had built upon the possibility of her acquiescence in its purport, vanished the moment he beheld her. There is something in the calm dignity of beauty and virtue, which the most hardened libertine cannot contemplate without awe:—upon

Dudley its effect was powerful and instantaneous. He was at once confused, humiliated, and yet doggedly resolved to go through with the odious business he had undertaken, so that it was difficult to say whether the manner or the matter were the most contemptible, as he stammered out his message, which he delivered as nearly as possible in the King's own words.

Much of the haughtiness and impetuous vehemence, which we formerly noticed in the character of Beatrice, had been softened by her residence in the court; but she was so outraged in every feeling, so wounded in her pride, so stung to her heart's core, not less by the nature of this proposition, than by its being communicated by Dudley, that all her early violence seemed to burst forth from her anew. Her face became suddenly and deeply inflamed, her eyes flashed fire, her features assumed that look of ineffable disdain which made them resemble her father's, and imparted an unfeminine, almost a terrible character to her beauty, and as she seized the carcanet and dashed it indignantly to the ground, she exclaimed—"The King is a

villain to offer me this insult, and thou art a sorry, and a base, and a hateful craven to become his pandar!" So saying she drew up her stately figure till it even seemed to exceed its usual height, and casting upon Dudley another look of unutterable scorn, walked hastily out of the apartment.

Whatever had been the delight, the enthusiasm, with which Beatrice had at first embraced a court-life, her dreams of its gaiety and glory had been long since dissipated, and many recent circumstances had combined to render her discontented with her station. Nothing, indeed, would have induced her to retain it so long, but her grateful attachment to the Queen, whose particular favour she enjoyed, to whose religion she had become a convert, and of whose numerous charities and virtues she was sometimes the almoner, and always the admirer. This unexpected outrage, proceeding from the King, and conveyed to her by Dudley, filled up the measure of her disgust. She saw no resource, no safety but in immediate flight, from a scene which had now become altogether hateful in her

eyes, and once having formed this design she set about its execution with a characteristic energy. Taking an affectionate leave of the Queen, from whom she received a valuable present, and to whom she assigned no other reason for her hasty departure than the necessity of her presence at the Tor House, she ordered a couple of horses to be purchased, and accompanied only by an aged groom, whom she had taken into her service from motives of charity, was riding along the great western road soon after sunrise of the following morning, in commencement of her journey into Somersetshire.

Dudley, who had hardly been prepared for such a sudden burst of indignation as that with which he had been visited, felt not a little ashamed and humiliated at the predicament in which he had placed himself. His court-sophistry, however, soon coming to the aid of his wounded pride, he began to think it fortunate for both parties that their intimacy had been abruptly broken off, since they were thus no longer liable to the wrath which would infallibly fall upon their heads, should the King

even suspect them of having disobeyed his orders. He was conscious, nevertheless, that he cut but a sorry figure in the transaction; and, anxious to escape from it as soon as possible, he picked up the carcanet, which had received no damage, intending to return it immediately to his royal master, and leave him to negociate his own treaty with the intractable Beatrice. He accordingly presented himself to the King, in obedience to the command he had received, and kneeling down, as was then the custom for all who approached him, deposited the jewels upon a table, stating that Miss Fitzmaurice had declined receiving them, and had bitterly reprimanded him for being the bearer of such a proposition. Of her invectives against the King himself, which would have placed her head in his power, he of course said nothing.

Henry stormed and stamped, as was his wont, when any evinced the smallest disposition to question his despotic will; and, having thrown out vague menaces of compelling the haughty traitress to yield to his desires, waved his hand

for Dudley to retire, a signal which was promptly and most willingly obeyed.

On the following day, when the tyrant learnt her flight from the Court, his wrath redoubled, and his threats of vengeance were deep and dread; but ere he had time to consider about their execution, he became suddenly and violently enamoured of Jane Seymour, and proportionably impatient to effect the destruction of Anna Boleyn. In this double absorption of his thoughts, the impression that Beatrice had made upon his capricious mind was as quickly effaced as it had been created. The whim of the moment was always pursued with such ardour, until it was gratified, that it drove out all its predecessors; and in his hot and horrid eagerness to behead one queen, and crown another, it is no wonder that he completely forgot the Somersetshire girl, for whom, in an idle hour, he had destined the honour of making her a successor to the Lady Talboys.

It did not appear, however, that he had overlooked Dudley's ready obedience to his com-

mands, for he increased his favour towards him, as if anxious to make him some atonement for the loss of his mistress. He was selected to attend the King at several of his private parties, where he generally encountered his kinsman Sir John, who seemed to be insinuating himself rapidly into the good graces of his royal master. by his merry cheer, and his various powers of entertainment. Although his increasing corpulency incapacitated him from pursuing the sports of the field with the same ardour as formerly, Henry retained all his original fondness for the pastime, and had given orders for a great hunting party in Epping Forest, to which Dudley and Sir John were invited. At that time the forest extended still nearer to London than it now does; and as it was well stocked with game, its facility of access occasioned it to be the favourite place of resort for the royal excursions.

The morning chosen for the sport proved highly propitious; the sky was cloudless; it was the month of May; the forest seemed to be

revelling in all the fresh and vivid sprightliness of spring; the grass and the bushes were covered with flowers; the boughs were dancing in a cool breeze; the birds saluted the royal party with music, which the noiseless tread of the horses upon the soft turf allowed to be distinctly heard; fragrance was wafted from the green alleys; every thing seemed to bespeak renovated life, beauty, and enjoyment, and to instil into the bosom of the beholder a feeling of complacency and delight. Henry was in unusual spirits, and in a still more uncustomary mood of condescension, laughing heartily at Sir John's buffoonery and merry tales; stooping even to venture at an occasional joke in return; patting the neck of Black Bosworth, which was the name of his hunter, or occasionally stopping to caress a favourite greyhound, of such unusual dimensions, that it was able, by placing its fore-paws upon the horse's shoulder, to lay its head in the King's lap.

As if it had been destined that all circumstances should prove auspicious on this happy

day, their pastime was followed with a success which left the keenest sportsman nothing to desire, until Henry gave orders for halting beneath the shade of a majestic oak, that the whole party might partake of some refreshment before they renewed the chace. Never was a command more cheerfully obeyed, for a hunter's appetite is proverbial; and the morning's exercise had afforded good excuse for their hunger. The attendants quickly unpacked and displayed the provisions; the hounds lay panting in the shade; the horses were browsing the grass or the boughs of the tree, while the monarch and his attendant train, dispersed in various groups upon the ground, were busily discussing the different viands, or quaffing the strong ale which had been broached for their recreation.

As soon as Henry had satisfied his appetite, he devoted his attention to his favourite greyhound, who had lamed himself by running a thorn into his foot. The King, who piqued himself upon his surgical and medical skill, would not suffer any of his attendants to approach the animal, but taking it in his lap,

carefully extracted the thorn with his own hands, applied a bandage to the wound, and secured it with a piece of thread; after which the royal dog-doctor and his four-legged patient exchanged kisses and caresses with every demonstration of mutual attachment.

"A lion in war and a lamb in peace," said Sir John, speaking apart to Dudley, and yet loud enough to be overheard; "who, that had seen our valorous King striking down the French at Tournay and Boulogne, would deem him so full of pity and compassion as thus to care, with his own royal fingers, for the healing of a greyhound?"

At this moment, the report of a distant cannon was heard, when the King, suddenly casting off the dog, starting upon his feet, and clapping his hands together, exclaimed—"Ha! ha! it is done! the business is done! Uncouple the hounds, let us now follow the sport."

This cannon was the preconcerted signal which was to mark the moment when Anna Boleyn's head was struck off! The King pursued his diversion in the forest some time longer;

and, returning to London, was married on that very evening, or, according to some authorities, on the following morning, to the Lady Jane Seymour.*

* This hunting anecdote is given in Rapin's History by Tindal: vol. vi. p. 577, ed. 1757.

CHAPTER VII.

Love and religion shall unite
Their flames to kindle reason's light,
Much injur'd Cecil!
Then rise, and all thy claims affirm,
Till slander's self shall blush to term
Thy mind imbecile.

Some time before the occurrence of the tragical event, recorded in the conclusion of the last chapter, Beatrice, pursuing her long journey with a persevering fearlessness, had arrived at the Tor House, when she found that Sir Lionel had a day or two before set off for London to claim the castle, manor, and estate of Farleigh, near Bath. Lord Hungerford, the possessor of these large domains, had just fallen a victim to the unsparing axe of the law, leaving no issue; and Sir Lionel, whose rapacity was insatiable,

because his profusion was boundless, immediately hurried up to the metropolis, to claim the property nominally on behalf of his ward, as the next heir, but, in fact, that he might obtain it for himself. As this object was not so quickly accomplished as he had anticipated, and his journey was connected with some other of the plots and plans in which he was incessantly occupied, he was detained a considerable time in the precincts of the Court.

It is needless to state the cordiality, with which Lady Fitzmaurice received her step-daughter, for there was never any pause or ebb in the flow of her affections; but instead of that cold and imperious, not to say arrogant, demeanour, with which Beatrice had been sometimes accustomed to repel her kindness, she threw herself into her arms, while in a mixed feeling of compunction at her former ingratitude, and delight at having found a safe home and a sincere friend, she pressed her mother fondly to her heart, and burst into tears. It has been already slightly intimated that her residence at the Court had effected a considerable change in

her views, hopes, and habits. We may now state that, when she returned to the Tor House, she was no longer the same haughty and aspiring girl as when she had quitted it. Beatrice was an altered woman! Her early levity, pride, and other errors, had emanated from a defective education,—from the false principles instilled into her by her father,—and from a want of reflection rather than any deficiency of sense or feeling. Rank and power, splendour and distinction, had been incessantly held out to her as the only worthy objects of ambition; the only infallible sources of happiness. Filled with these expectations, she had visited the Court with a buoyant and a bounding heart; but, young and giddy as she was, her mind was too strong, too penetrating, to allow her to be long deceived. She was surrounded by all that had been described to her as forming the certain constituents of happiness; yet, after the first impressions of novelty had worn off, she felt not this promised felicity in her own bosom, nor could she discover that others were more fortunate than herself. The Queen, who had

been promoted from a comparatively humble station to the very summit of grandeur, was, perhaps, the most unhappy person in the Court. When Beatrice had been called into her private chamber to play over to her some of the French ditties in which she delighted, she had often seen her melt into tears, and recal with regret the days of her youth, when she lived obscure and contented: a touching and instructive lesson, which effectually dispelled from the mind of her auditress all the false and glittering visions by which she had been deluded.

Blinded as Beatrice had been as to the proper objects of pursuit, her views of abstract morality and justice had never been corrupted. She possessed an innate and supreme contempt for baseness, cruelty, and oppression; at the Court of Henry the Eighth there was little else to be witnessed;—with two or three exceptions, she beheld nothing but fraud, duplicity, and abject prostration in the grandees; nothing but selfishness, sensuality, and cruel despotism, in the King; and the previous disappointment of her hopes was quickly succeeded by disgust. She

felt all the real littleness of the great; the utter worthlessness of every thing, upon which she had hitherto valued either herself or others; and humiliated as well as mortified, she imbibed such a contempt for the whole scene in which she was moving, that she would have fled from the Court with more alacrity than ever she had sought it, had she not been restrained by her grateful and affectionate attachment to the Queen.

This friendship was now to be strengthened and exalted by the sanctions of religion. As Anna Boleyn felt herself to be the immediate cause of the Reformation in England, she delighted to set herself up as its champion and asserter. She was a general patroness of learned men, and a steady protector of those who favoured liberal notions in religion. She had a little court of her own, consisting almost entirely of eminent Protestants, among whom were Latimer and Shaxton, her chaplains, who assisted in the distribution of her unbounded charities. In private, among her ladies, she employed herself in embroidery, in making clothes for the

poor, and in reading Tindal's Translation of the Testament, the execution of which she had promoted as far as she could. Beatrice had been educated in the Catholic faith; but the perusal of this volume, of which the Queen presented her with a copy, and the conversations of her royal mistress, soon convinced her quick judgment that she had been in error; and she embraced the reformed religion, with an enthusiasm that impelled her to obey its dictates, and rendered the incipient change in her character total and irreversible.

The last insult, she had received from the King, had sunk deeper into her heart upon the Queen's account, than even upon her own. Considering Dudley to have become utterly degraded and corrupted by the poisonous atmosphere of the Court, she had dismissed him from her thoughts, as one totally unworthy of any thing but contempt; and thus, upon her first arrival at the Tor House, she had been enabled in some degree to tranquillize her irritated feelings by the consolations of religion. But when she learnēd the savage slaughter of the Queen,

of the Lord Rochford, her noble brother, and the four innocent courtiers who were made victims to the King's passion for another woman, not even the mild injunctions of her new religion could prevent one of those sudden ebullitions of her former violence, to which the infirmity of human nature rendered her for some time liable. She would have staked her life, her soul, upon the guiltlessness of her royal mistress; and the paroxysm of indignation, with which she received the tidings of her murder, remained unabated, until she at length found relief in a passionate burst of tears. Her previous disgust was admiration, compared to the unutterable loathing, with which she now looked back upon the palace and all its inmates. To her present conceptions, no savages or cannibals in the grim deserts of Africa could offer a more degraded or revolting spectacle. It presented to her a horrid and confused picture of abject courtiers, crawling upon their knees before a bloated and bloody tyrant, who struck off the heads of men and women, favourites and wives, according to the caprice of the moment. The

axe, the gibbet, and the halter, seemed to dance before her eyes, intermixed with gorgeous trappings, banquets, pageants, mummeries, and all the sanguinary pomp and festivity of a barbarian court; till, sickened at the very thought, she endeavoured to abstract her mind and memory as much as possible from all recollection of the gory grandeur in which she had so lately moved.

In this frame of mind, suffering under a sense of the cruelties inflicted by the nation's tyrant, she felt more than usually disposed to resist the oppression of any of his petty imitators. Accident brought under her cognizance an act of unnecessary severity inflicted upon Cecil by command of Captain Basset: she had interfered for his protection upon a former occasion; she did so again now, and with an authoritative earnestness that would not be denied. Freed from the imprisonment to which he had been condemned, Cecil hastened, in the first instance, to express his acknowledgments to his kind mediatrix, who was not a little struck by the change that had been pro-

duced in his appearance since their last interview. She was only his senior by a single year, at the time when she had so haughtily branded him as "a boy and an idiot." In the intervening period, his form and features had assumed all the comeliness of manhood, although his fair countenance still wore an expression of melancholy, as well as of delicate health. It was obvious that her first term of reproach was no longer applicable to him; and in the long conversation that ensued, she saw every reason to retract the second, as well as to doubt the justice of the report made by the commissioners respecting his sanity. Questioning him as to the circumstances by which it was occasioned, he confessed the disordered state of his mind at the moment, and stated the occurrence to which his temporary alienation of reason was attributable. Of the painful delusion under which he had then laboured, she quickly disabused him by explaining the nature of the celestial phænomenon he had witnessed; and from that instant the conviction flashed upon her mind, that the whole statement of his imbecility was a

base fabrication, invented for the purpose of justifying his maltreatment and imprisonment, and of usurping his rights.

Distressing as it was to implicate her father in such a heinous charge, and to oppose herself to his violence, she resolved, with her usual energy and decision, to contravene his nefarious project to the utmost of her ability, and to induce him, if possible, to render justice and make restitution to his injured ward. Compunction for her own former unkindness and insult being added to shame and regret for the multiplied injuries of every sort, that had been heaped upon him by his guardian, she felt herself impelled by all the pleadings of humanity, as well as bound by every injunction of religion, to make such tardy atonement as lay in her power to the much wronged and unfortunate Cecil. Bitterly did she lament the supineness, which had led her to become a passive spectator of his oppression, until it was almost too late to redress his grievances; but at the period to which she reverted, she had firmly believed in his im-

puted infirmity of mind, while her thoughts had been too much engrossed by other pursuits to allow her to take any deep interest in the fate of one, whom every one affected to consider as a poor weak-witted boy.

What might be the consequences of her enlightening his neglected mind, and making him sensible of the outrages and usurpations to which he had been subjected, she did not stop to inquire. Her family would be probably ejected from the Tor House — Sir Lionel might be impoverished—she herself might lose her rank in society, and participate in the disgrace, which would attach to all who had been tacit accomplices in Cecil's oppression. These were motives for urging Sir Lionel to a voluntary surrender, but they afforded no justificacation for a continuance of his cruelty. Her duty was manifest and imperative. With right and justice, with religion and law, there could be no compromise—no calculating even of a father's interest, still less of her own; and under the influence of these impressions, she

set about the execution of her purpose without delay, and without the smallest wavering of resolution.

It was her first care to place in his hands Tindal's translation of the Scriptures, which he devoured with an intense and unremitting avidity, until he had completed the perusal of the Old Testament. Its effect upon his mind was like that produced upon the blind chaos of Nature, when the Almighty said: "Let there be light!" and the sun arose in the heavens in majesty and glory, and the darkness was dispersed, and the clouds fled away, and the creation was displayed in all the grandeur of its first elements, though without that full beauty, order, and harmony, which it was subsequently destined to assume. His thoughts were not less exalted than amazed, by being lifted up out of the ignorant present, and carried back to remote ages, and among a strange and distant people, when the Creator himself deigned to have frequent communion with poor shepherds and herdsmen; when prophets walked amid their fields; and almost every hill and valley,

every well and rivulet, was hallowed by some divine miracle; when signs and wonders were set in the sky; and heaven and earth seemed to talk to one another in the language of portents and prodigies. His own country, and all modern times, were banished from his thoughts; his mind was transported to Judæa and the early ages; he wandered around the walls of Jerusalem, in the valley of Jehosaphat, on the banks of the Cedron, in the vale, or beside the waters, of Gihon; or strayed into the wilderness, even unto the smoking and haggard shores of the Dead Sea, which produced nothing but bitterness and ashes. While his spirit was thus disembodied, and wafted in an ecstatic day-dream to the Holy Land, so vivid were his conceptions, that he imagined himself to feel the heat of a Syrian sun, and to seek a cooling shade beneath the palm-trees of Engaddi, or the cedars of Lebanon, under whose protecting branches, as he stretched himself along, he heard the voices of patriarchs and prophets, filling him with the awe of their invisible presence; while, in the intervals of their sonorous

and deep accents, angelic strains of exquisite mellifluence stole softly down from Heaven upon his enraptured ear; and again all was hushed, and glorious visions floated around and above him, and he saw passing before his eyes, in a continued Apocalypse, all the cities, and nations, and ages of the world, with their accompanying characters and events, as they are figured in the Old Testament, even from Genesis unto Malachi, the last of the prophets.

By the mere touch of his Promethean fancy, he had thus, as it were, reanimated the personages, and revived the extinct ages of the past, until the whole pageant of time, as it existed before the birth of Christ, had been conjured up and placed in array before him. His imagination had been expanded and exalted, his knowledge had been incalculably increased by bringing a new world under his cognizance; but his judgment had been sometimes confounded; his feelings more than once revolted; he was not contented with any model that had been brought before him; he sighed for something of a purer and more gentle character.

This aspiration was gratified, even to repletion, by a perusal of the New Testament, by his becoming acquainted and thoroughly imbued with the religion of the heart, whose distinguishing characteristic is love and universal charity; by his deep reverence for the character of Christ, whose apparition upon the earth threw down the ancient idols of brute violence and physical power, which men had hitherto been content to worship, to set up a moral dominion in their place, to establish the majesty of virtue, the might of humility, the omnipotence of all-embracing philanthropy. When he had closed the sacred volume, this was the sole idea to which his thoughts reverted; this was the fond recollection over which his heart delighted to brood. If it may be spoken without profanation, his own character sympathized, at least in its affectionate meekness, with the model of sublime humanity, which was thus held up for his homage and admiration. He had yearned to consider all mankind as his brethren—the children of one common father: he had revolted from the practices

of war and violence, as unworthy of a rational creature; he had despised the accidental distinctions of birth and fortune; he had refused to offer that homage to strength and beauty, which is only due to goodness, genius, and wisdom; he had wished to exalt the mind above the body, and to reverence none but that moral and intellectual pre-eminence which a peasant may attain, while it eludes the grasp of a prince. All this he saw illustrated by the example, and enforced by the precepts, of our Saviour—the first who abolished all distinctions, who elevated and consoled the mind of the beggar, by telling him that he was equal in the sight of God to the proudest monarch of the earth, who won sinners to repentance by kindness rather than by terror, who inculcated an abstract benevolence, who commanded us to love even our enemies. To find the secret aspirations of his own heart confirmed, and exalted to a more sublime height of charity by all the precepts of Christianity, filled him with intense delight for the sake of his fellow-creatures; while it restored to him his own self-esteem, and even awakened an honest pride

in his bosom, when he reflected that he had been branded as a craven and a simpleton, for entertaining sentiments which had been promulgated by the Founder of our religion, and for obeying those observances of brotherhood and peace which he had specially enjoined to all his followers. The moral grandeur, the wisdom and majesty of this great exemplar, he did not of course presume to imitate; but his sweetness, his tenderness, his humility, his comprehensive humanity, touched upon a sympathizing chord in his own bosom, which occasioned him to cling to his hallowed prototype with all the enthusiasm that a fond and affectionate heart could inspire.

While the moral world was becoming enlarged by the diffusion of enlightened Christianity, which, having hitherto been a sealed book and a dead letter, might be now said to have been introduced into England for the first time, the boundaries of the physical world were being extended by discoveries which revealed a new continent, with all its unknown nations and wonders, and offered an unlimited range to the imagination. Men's minds had

not recovered from the first amazement occasioned by the discovery of America, when the conquest of Mexico, and the ransacking of Peru, imparted to sober history and to the actual occurrences of the day, a wildness and romance surpassing all the fables of the Hesperian gardens—all the miraculous adventures of the Argonauts. About this period, China was first visited by the Portuguese; Canada and the Magellanic Straights, Ceylon, the Bermudas and St. Helena, were first discovered. Fresh wonders were springing up in all directions. It seemed as if God were making a new revelation of the earth, as well as of his holy word; and the mind of man was dazzled by the unexpected lights, thus let in upon it at the same moment, both from the visible and the spiritual world.

All these marvellous and astounding tidings did Beatrice pour into the greedy ear of Cecil. Like a blind man suddenly restored to sight, he was at first bewildered and confused, lost in the magnitude and variety of his own conceptions; but his fine clear intellect soon enabled

him to methodize and arrange her intelligence, so that the expansion of his mind, rapid as it was, occasioned no confusion in her ideas.

While he was thus occupied, one of the miscreants who had been employed by Sir Lionel to practise upon his faculties by appalling him with spectres, phantasms, and other nocturnal illusions, having quarrelled with Captain Basset, and being dismissed from his post, communicated to Cecil his share in these infamous cruelties, and divulged at the same time various other machinations to which he had been exposed when a youth. Beatrice, who saw in this confession a confirmation of all her worst suspicions, was overwhelmed, at once with shame on her father's account, and indignation against his agent, whom she upbraided bitterly with his inhumanity, and threatened him with a severe punishment. But Cecil, reminding her that it became not man to be his own carver of revenge, declared that he felt rejoiced at being so soon enabled to practise the dictates of his new religion, by forgiving his enemies; and mildly telling the offender that he pardoned

him all his misdeeds, dismissed him with an earnest recommendation that he should solicit a similar forgiveness from Heaven.

In his present frame of mind, indeed, it would have been impossible for him to feel anger, even against his bitterest and most unrelenting persecutor. He was in an ecstasy—wrapt in an elysium of delight; for by the recent revelations he was reconciled to Heaven, to himself, to the world. His religious misgivings were dispelled; he no longer doubted his own sanity; and he saw that his fellow-creatures were only guilty and unhappy, because they had wandered from the paths of peace and of the Gospel, towards which he hoped they might be induced to retrace their steps, by the diffusion of the new faith and the light of free inquiry. His doubts were solved, the scales fell from his eyes, his morbid feelings became braced into a healthy tone, he was in a state of beatitude, and only the more anxious that all his fellow-creatures should become participators in his felicity.

Beatrice, who had undertaken to become his

instructress, was herself often embarrassed by the depth of his penetration, the novelty as well as the profoundness of his remarks. Perhaps his faculties exhibited a greater strength and more exuberant fertility, from having been so long allowed to lie fallow. By the established modes of education, we become conversant with sounds, rather than stocked with ideas; we learn languages, not for the wisdom they contain, but for the idiom that should convey it,—thus worshipping the shrine instead of the god;—one mind is set up as a guide for another, until, by following the beaten track, instead of inquiring the way for ourselves, we become like horses, who have been so long accustomed to the rein, that when they miss it they become incapable of self-government, and either run away, or are stopped by the first obstacle they encounter. By such a servile and imitative system, the memory and the judgment may be strengthened; but the powers of original thought, of decompounding and viewing things in the abstract, must be proportionably weakened from their never being called into use. While

Beatrice was endeavouring to explain some difficult point, by means of its rudiments and accidents, Cecil viewed it in its unincumbered elements, and jumped to a conclusion which had escaped even the penetration of his companion. Thus did he as often become her teacher as her pupil; and while his faculties were developing themselves, and his knowledge increasing with an almost miraculous rapidity, his heart was receiving an impression which was destined never to be effaced.

He had always been an admirer of Beatrice's charms: as a youth, he had felt and expressed an affectionate gratitude for her occasional interference in his favour; and would have been glad to possess her friendship, had not his advances been haughtily repelled; but he had never been blind to the defects in her character. At present, however, he beheld her an altered woman; her pride humbled, her selfishness converted into benevolence, her girlish admiration of duellists turned into abhorrence, her addiction to field sports, or to any pursuit that inflicted cruelty upon animals, utterly forsworn.

To his original admiration of her charms were now added a boundless gratitude for her services, an unmixed approbation of her virtues; and these feelings, fostered by a daily and almost hourly intercourse, soon ripened into all the ardour of love.

When Beatrice had resolved to make some atonement to Cecil for her father's cruelty and injustice, she had commenced the performance of her duty with a wounded spirit, a disappointed heart, a deep feeling of compunctious pity for the object of her kindly offices. As they read together from the Scriptures the simple and affecting pastoral of Ruth and Boaz, the story of Hagar and Ishmael in the desert, the cruelty shown to Joseph by his brethren, the captivity and deliverance of the Jews, or the sufferings of Naboth, condemned by means of false witnesses, she could not help occasionally identifying her own situation, or Cecil's, with some of these passages in the sacred writings; and the depth and tenderness of her compassion were increased by its assuming a religious tone. In proportion as the bright in-

tellect of her scholar developed itself, even till it threatened to eclipse that of his teacher, her sense of the injustice he had sustained became aggravated, her admiration of his talents was heightened. His eagerness to put in practice the sublime morality inculcated in the New Testament, the delicacy with which he alluded to the injuries inflicted upon him by her father, of which he had now a full knowledge, and the generous and loving magnanimity with which he pronounced his forgiveness, and avowed his resolution to destroy all his enemies by making them his friends, placed the superiority of his heart upon a par with that of his intellect, and completed her reverence of his character. The blood-shedding heroes, whom her girlish fancy had idolized, she now contemplated as odious and vulgar bravoes; and she would as soon have thought of returning to her doll, as to her juvenile admiration of exterior comeliness and splendour of apparel. All these attractions had been possessed by Dudley; and he had proved that they might be united in the person

of a moral coward, who was unworthy of her notice. She now looked for that heroism and beauty which are seated in the mind, for grandeur of soul rather than of station, for the rich and imperishable ornaments that are worn within, not the tinsel trappings that decorate the exterior; and all these she found combined in the once-despised and repudiated Cecil Hungerford.

Still, however, she might have imagined that her sentiments assumed no warmer semblance than that of admiration and friendship, had not Cecil himself, emboldened by her evident partiality for his society, made a respectful but passionate declaration of his love; pointing out, as an inducement to her compliance with his wishes, the manifold advantages that would result from their union. Forgiving Sir Lionel all his misdeeds, he proposed even to leave him in unquestioned possession of the Tor House, provided he would receive him as his son-in-law and his friend; and either to retire with Beatrice to some other residence, or to remain where they were, as might best accord with her father's

wishes. The delight, with which Beatrice listened to this proposition, betrayed to her at once the secret wishes of her heart. It presented to her an amicable adjustment of all difficulties and differences, the only means by which Cecil could be restored to his rights, so far at least as he desired to be reinstated in them, without dissension or violence, without abandoning his future claims, or exposing her father to any present disgrace. Feeling it to be a proposal not less consonant to the aspirations of her own bosom, than to the interests and happiness of all parties, she would not trifle for a moment with a mind so sensitive as that of her lover, but admitted at once the reciprocity of her attachment, and the unmingled satisfaction with which she accepted the offer of his hand.

Lady Fitzmaurice, to whom she immediately communicated all that had passed, was scarcely less delighted than herself. Although she had conscientiously believed in Cecil's incompetency to assume the management of his own affairs, especially after the report of the commissioners,

she had been always rendered deeply unhappy by the wrongs he suffered, against which she had seized every opportunity of expostulating. Now that she believed him to be restored to the full possession of his reason, she entered with the greater ardour into the proposed measure for reinstating him in his defrauded rights, because she believed that Sir Lionel would gladly seize so favourable an opportunity for effecting a compromise and retaining the estates in his family; while she earnestly hoped to convert her husband at the same moment, and lead him to abandon all his dark alliances, all his plans of spoliation, vengeance, and aggrandisement. This project was ever nearest and dearest to her heart; and she hailed the contemplated union with joy, not only on account of Cecil and Beatrice, whose happiness she trusted it would secure, but in the belief that it would work the accomplishment of all her own affectionate wishes for the reformation of her husband.

Such was the state of affairs at the Tor House, when Sir Lionel returned to it. After much delay, he had at length succeeded in all

the objects of his visit to London. Farleigh Castle, with its extensive manors, had been granted to him by the King, on payment of an inconsiderable sum; and he had made such arrangements for the overthrow of his greatest remaining enemy, the Lord Abbot of Glastonbury, as he flattered himself could not fail to ensure his destruction. He arrived, therefore, in a mood of unusual complacency; the dejection, with which the mild and placid resignation of Lady Fitzmaurice was apt to be clouded, vanished at the sight of her husband; and the smile with which she welcomed him assumed an arch and significant expression, from her belief that the tidings she had to communicate to him were not less pleasant than important. With an affectionate playfulness she told him she had a secret for his ear, worth more than all the news that he could have brought down from London; and she would have been glad to trifle some time longer with him before she divulged it: finding, however, that he grew impatient, and was preparing to quit her, she would not hold him in suspense, but made a hasty relation of

every thing that had occurred since the return of Beatrice.

No tropical hurricane or tornado ever sprung up with more terrible and sudden rage than did Sir Lionel, who leaped from his chair, dashed his hand violently upon the table, and exclaimed, in a voice rendered hoarse by passion—"Fool! gull! dotard! dost thou not see, that if I acknowledged his competency to marry Beatrice, I confess him to be no idiot? that I accuse myself for the past, and am robbed of my hopes for the future?—that the estates become his property now, and at his death go to his heirs instead of me?"

"Lack-a-day, lack-a-day!" said the terrified Lady Fitzmaurice; "will not Beatrice become the owner of them now, and leave them to her children hereafter?"

"What!" exclaimed Sir Lionel, with increased fury, "am I to vail bonnet to my own daughter—to become the vassal of an unfilial girl; and have I defied perils of all sorts—have I scorned Heaven and earth—that I might enrich her unborn brats? No!—what I have

won I will keep and enjoy myself. No one shall touch an acre of my lands. Mine they are, and mine they shall be. Neither man nor devil shall tear them from my grasp."

In the vehemence of his wrath, he had more explicitly avowed his usurpations to Lady Fitzmaurice than he had ever done before; and, as if conscious of his lapse, he continued in a less irritated tone—" Breathe not a word of what has passed between us. Away to your maids and your spinning-wheels! leave this matter to me, and it shall be quickly sped—away!"

So saying, he hurried to his apartment, that he might consider what steps to pursue; for, from his knowledge of Beatrice's decisive character, he feared she might marry Cecil without awaiting his consent, should he not interpose some instant and effectual impediment. Quick in expedients, and subtle in mischief, his plans were soon digested. At the moment of his being in London, the King, induced by political motives not to quarrel irreconcilably with the See of Rome, had commenced a hot perse-

cution of the protestants for not veering and vacillating according to the changes of the royal weathercock. Tindal's Translation of the Scriptures had been bought up and burnt by Tunstall, the Bishop of London; but this measure proving ineffectual for their suppression, Henry had recourse to his usual Draconic system, and caused it to be made a capital offence to possess a single copy of the work in question. On this, and equally trivial charges, several had been already executed, and Sir Lionel no sooner learnt that Cecil possessed and studied a copy of this interdicted book, than he saw an easy method, not only of preventing his union with his daughter, but of getting rid of him for ever, by procuring his death as a heretic, and thus securing his own immediate and legal possession of his estates. Depositions as to the fact were made by several of his myrmidons, who, in this instance, had no necessity to call in the aid of perjury; but Sir Lionel was aware, that if proceedings were instituted in his own neighbourhood, his motives would be suspected, while the general commiseration of the fate of

Cecil, and more especially the imputed imbecility, which he had himself taken such pains to fix upon him, might procure his acquittal.

To avoid at once the odium of success and the chance of failure, he determined to have him conveyed to London, where his history would be unknown, and where, in the crowd of similar offenders who were allowed to linger in prison or ordered off to execution as a matter of course, his fate would excite no particular notice or comment. Not a moment was lost in the performance of this infamous project. Without exchanging a syllable with his intended victim, he caused him to be seized; and making his armed witnesses serve in the further capacity of a guard, he held them responsible for the safe custody of their prisoner, and dispatched the whole party to London, with a letter to Sir Thomas Cromwell, with whom he had already had some intercourse on the subject of the Abbot of Glastonbury. Cecil, who saw that all resistance was useless, yielded to a violence, the motives of which he was utterly at a loss to comprehend, only requesting that he

might be allowed to speak to Sir Lionel, and take leave of Beatrice. Both these favours were refused; but when he asked permission to carry with him his Bible, a ready assent was given, not without a smile of derision at his thus affording evidence against himself, and becoming a party to his own destruction.

Accompanied by this ruffianly escort, Cecil pursued his journey, deeply distressed in mind at being thus suddenly severed from Beatrice, at a moment when he was enjoying the first taste of happiness that he had ever experienced; and bewildered with amazement as to the cause of his arrest and conveyance to London, on which subjects his companions preserved an impenetrable silence, conformably to their instructions, that he might be the less prepared to arrange his own defence, or to recriminate upon his accuser. Melancholy as was his retrospect of the past, and gloomy as were his apprehensions of the consequences that might follow this violent seizure of his person, he still found consolation from perusing the sacred volume, whenever their occasional stoppages upon the road

allowed him to do so. To this solace, considering it a furtherance of their own object, his conductors offered no hindrance, and it sufficed to occupy and tranquillize his mind until their arrival in London, which they reached without any occurrence that needs be recorded. Here they betook themselves, in the first instance, to the house of Sir Thomas Cromwell, who immediately ordered the young heretic to be committed to prison; and as all the inferior places of confinement were full, from the great number of offenders implicated under the sanguinary and contradictory statutes at this moment so unrelentingly enforced, Cecil enjoyed the unenviable honour of being imprisoned in the Tower of London.

CHAPTER VIII.

Is this the craven idiot boy,
Who never could the rights enjoy
Of Reason's charter?
Behold the love-enlighten'd youth
Offer his life for Christian truth—
A hero-martyr!

Cecil had not been long immured, when he learnt by accident the nature of the charge that was registered against him in the Bishop's Court. In the same cell with himself was imprisoned an unhappy priest, who had been a grievous sufferer from the cruelty of Sir Thomas More, when Chancellor; by whose orders, and in whose presence, he had not only been tied up to a tree in the garden of Sir Thomas's house at Chelsea, and severely whipped, but afterwards put to the torture in prison; the Chancellor himself

superintending the whole horrid process.* By these inflictions he had been induced to abjure his opinions, which were those of the reformed religion, and was accordingly set at liberty; but haunted and stung by remorse for his apostacy, he had fallen into a depression of spirits, and fits of stupor, which continued for some time, and threatened the total alienation of his reason. At length he suddenly resumed his former cheerfulness, and his friends flattered themselves that his mind had permanently recovered its tone; but this temporary elevation had been occasioned only by his resolution to expiate his offence, to proclaim his old tenets,

* The furious bigotry of this otherwise amiable and enlightened man, who could cheerfully offer up his own life upon a scruple of conscience, cannot be better illustrated than by his own words:—"That which I professe in my epitaph is that I have been troublesome to hereticks; I have done it with a little ambition, for I so hate them, these kind of men, that I would be their sorest enemy that I could."—How different from Sir Henry Wotton's epitaph, when the world was a hundred years older—"Disputandi Pruritus, Ecclesiæ Scabies!" Sir Thomas More affords an awful example how soon the kindest heart and the clearest head may become utterly perverted when once tainted with the *odium theologicum*.

and to die as a martyr to the truth. To this course he felt himself peculiarly impelled at the present moment, when he saw in the King's recent measures every symptom of a total backsliding into all the errors of popery; and he accordingly preached openly against idolatry, desiring the people not to trust for their salvation to pilgrimages, to the cowl of St. Francis, to the prayers of the saints, or to the false miracles that were worked by images. For this offence he was seized, tried in the Bishop's Court as a relapsed and obstinate heretic, and soon after Cecil's arrival in the Tower was condemned to be burnt.

The friends of this man, while searching the books of the Bishop's Court, in order to prepare for his defence, encountered the name of Cecil Hungerford, to whom, on their being admitted into the prison to confer with his companion, they communicated the nature of the charge that was registered against him. Once acquainted with the danger that menaced him, he prepared himself to meet it with a firm and undaunted spirit. Under the spiritual tuition of

Father Barnabas, he had learnt little of popery but the Book of Legends,—a compilation which many of the better-informed Catholics disclaimed. So manifest, however, were the general errors and abuses of the system, so deeply did he feel persuaded that the new opinions, as the reformed religion was termed, were calculated to ameliorate, advance, and ennoble the human race—that he disdained the very thought of not proclaiming himself a convert to the tenets of Luther, a possessor and reader of Tindal's Translation of the Scriptures, and a decided opposer of all the old errors and superstitions. That faith must needs be wrong, thought Cecil to himself, which leads its followers to persecute, torture, and destroy those who differ from them. A real Christian cannot even think intolerantly; before he can add cruelty to bigotry, he must have altogether abjured the religion he professes, and have spurned the precept and example of its Founder, who commanded us to forgive seventy times seven times, and even upon the Cross implored pardon for his mur-

derers, because they were in error and knew not what they did.

In these sentiments he was corroborated by his companion, who possessed him of all the religious points which were then the subject of general controversy and of present persecution, impressing upon him, at the same time, the imperative duty of laying down his life for the truth, if called upon to do so, and warning him, by his own history, of the agony with which his conscience would be smitten, if he suffered himself to be terrified into a denial of his sentiments, and to apostatize from Christ. Such had been his own remorse, that he declared he should have hung himself like Judas, had he not embraced his present resolution of making atonement, by sacrificing himself for the good cause. So far from being intimidated by the cruel fate that awaited him, his cheerfulness increased as the hour approached, until his growing enthusiasm was kindled into ecstasy and rapture. He saw beatific visions of angels descending from the sky to place the crown of

martyrdom upon his head; and in this frame of mind, singing divine hymns, while his face was irradiated with delight, he marched forth to the place of execution, where he embraced the fagots in a transport of joy, as the means of procuring him eternal rest, and endured his horrid punishment with a fortitude that few of the martyrs had surpassed.

Hitherto Cecil's constancy had been fortified by the example and the conversation of his companion; but when left to his own solitary reflections, the dreadful trial which he had to encounter presented itself in more appalling colours, and there was a severe and painful struggle in his soul. Had he been called upon to lay down his life at an earlier period, he could have obeyed, not only without repining, but even with alacrity, for existence presented no attractions to his view. But to be snatched from the world by an agonizing death, at the very moment he was reconciled to it, when it courted him for the first time with a prospect of happiness, when he was restored to his own esteem, when he could contemplate his fellow-creatures

as his brethren; and above all, when Beatrice's confession of a reciprocal love had attached him to life by the promise of an ineffable and boundless felicity—this, this was indeed a sacrifice which could not be made without a convulsive effort of the spirit. This struggle, however, was made, and he came out of it triumphant. Not only did he consider himself bound to this self-immolation by the religion he had embraced, but feeling that the interests of the whole human race would be incalculably advanced by the establishment of protestantism, which was in no way so likely to be cemented as by the blood of martyrs in its cause, he viewed himself as an offering for the good of his fellow-creatures, under which impression he forgot Cecil Hungerford, and even Beatrice, and awaited his doom with a calm and magnanimous resolution.

To this fortitude of purpose he had just braced his mind, when he was ordered to be brought up for examination at the Bishop's Court, whose reverend judges appeared to be not less surprised at his youthful and interesting

appearance, than at the firm and collected, though respectful, manner of his deportment. Being informed of the charges against him, and called upon for a declaration of his faith, he at once admitted the truth of the accusation, and professed his attachment to the protestant tenets, which he expounded with a clearness, humility, and eloquence, that excited the wrath of many of his auditors, and the surprise of all.—"Tush, boy, tush!" cried one of his judges, when he had concluded—"these be the pestilent heresies of the day that have sprung up in the university of Wirtemberg, and among the crazy scholars of Germany. Where was thy religion before the time of Luther?"

"Where yours was not, my Lord," replied Cecil respectfully—"in the written word of God."

"Avaunt! thou spotted and cankered heretic!" exclaimed his interrogator, nettled at his rejoinder—"What has a layman to do with the written word of God? Shall a boy like thee know better than all the fathers of the Church, and all these reverend divines? Wilt thou pe-

ril thy life upon a conceit like this? and how wilt thou prove thyself to be a better Christian than ourselves, when thou art burnt at the stake amid the curses of all true believers?"

"By a better imitation of Christ's example," said Cecil firmly—"by returning blessings for curses, and imploring forgiveness for you and all the authors of my cruel death, since I verily believe that ye know not what ye do."

"Away with the young blasphemer who would profanely parody the words of our Lord!" cried two or three voices at once. "Away with him!" was echoed by others—"young as he is, he is a withered bow, and a brand for the burning. He seeks the death, and he shall have it. He shall be made a holocaust to the Lord!"

In the midst of these and similar exclamations, Cecil was hurried from the Court, and re-conveyed to his cell in the Tower, where silence and solitude allowed him to collect his thoughts, and re-consider the occurrences of the morning. He contemplated the conduct of his violent and unjust judges without animosity, his own with a considerable degree of compla-

cency, for he felt that he had now gone too far to recede, that he had fought the good fight, and kept the faith, that he had won the crown of martyrdom, and that by the cause in which he died, he should entitle himself to be called the benefactor of his species. His bosom expanding with the tranquil delight, inspired by the most exalted feelings of religion and philanthropy, he fell upon his knees, and having returned thanks for the fortitude with which he had been filled in so trying a crisis, and implored forgiveness for Sir Lionel, his judges, and all his other persecutors, he betook himself to his pallet, and slept soundly till the morning.

At an early hour on the following day the door of his cell was opened, and he received a visit from a personage whom he had never before seen. In figure he was somewhat stout and bulky; on his head was a black velvet bonnet, with a flat double top, and a scull piece coming down to the nape of his neck. His small deeply-set eyes were close to one another, his brow low, his hair lank and coarse, the nose slightly turned up, his cheek-bones

prominent, although the lower part of his face was fleshy; his thin lips were closely compressed, his sleek skin was of an uniform wan hue, and his general physiognomy expressed craft, energy, remorselessness. This was the celebrated Sir Thomas Cromwell, now made Visitor-General of the monasteries, whose selection for the great and difficult office of the suppression, did credit to the discernment of his royal master. It has been mentioned that Cecil's conductors were furnished with a letter to him from Sir Lionel; he had occasion to visit the Tower upon some other business; and took the opportunity of seeking an interview with the heretic, who had been represented to him as of such an obstinate and dangerous character. His first impression was that of astonishment at his youth; his second, of amazement that so firm and inalterable a fortitude should be united to such delicacy of frame, and so much sweetness and gentleness of manners. Personally he had nothing to gain by Cecil's sacrifice, and he therefore felt a touch of compunction at his fate, to which

he was rarely liable when his own interests were at issue.

Influenced by the promptings of this rare compassion, he strenuously urged Cecil to make such concessions as might enable him to avoid his doom;—to confess his errors, to give up the reading of the Testament, and tender a future submission to all such observances as should be enjoined by the spiritual authorities; promising to use his own influence to procure his liberation, if Cecil would only authorize him to express his regret for his past conduct. At this instant the most piercing shrieks, followed shortly after by groans of agony and exhaustion, fell with a harrowing effect upon the sensitive ear of Cecil, who was informed by his visitant, that they proceeded from a contumacious heretic in an adjoining cell, then undergoing the torture. From the screams and sufferings of this unhappy wretch, Sir Thomas warned him of what he had himself to endure, should he persevere in his schismatical obstinacy; but, although Cecil melted into tears, and sickened to his very heart at

the thought of the torments which a fellow-creature was then undergoing, he declared that it only fortified his resolution to become instrumental, as he trusted he should be by his martyrdom, in the subversion of a church which could perpetrate such enormities; adding, that his own sufferings would only be momentary, while the benefit of his example might, perhaps, be enduring and perpetual.

He then detailed what had passed at his examination on the day before, at the Bishop's Court, when his visitant declared, that had he been previously aware of this circumstance he would not have attempted to interfere; it was now, he said, too late; no power on earth could save him, and he must therefore leave him, however reluctantly, to perish in his own blind and wilful perverseness. With these words he departed, and the door again closed upon the solitary prisoner.

Such was the magnanimity, such the courageous devotedness of Cecil, who had been branded as a craven, because he renounced the practices of war, and refused to lift his hand against his

fellow-creature, even in the imitative semblance of a battle; while his kinsman, Dudley, the dauntless soldier, who was ever in the front ranks of the fight, and had never failed to kill his adversary in a duel, had quailed and cowered beneath a tyrant's frown, and proved himself to be deficient in that true bravery which is seated in the soul, and founded upon principle.

Sir Thomas Cromwell's declaration, that it was now too late to save him, was quickly verified. The lieutenant of the Tower visited him on the following morning, with the appalling intelligence that he had received a warrant for his execution, which was ordered to take place in three days, expressing his sincere regret at the same time that one so young, and apparently so innocent, should be condemned to so cruel a death. Cecil thanked him for his commiseration, and declaring that he was perfectly resigned to his fate, requested him, as a last favour, to supply him with the materials of writing, and to forward for him the letter which he should put into his hands. A willing com-

pliance being yielded to this demand, he sat down and wrote as follows :—

" These from my prison in the Tower of London.—My most entirely well-beloved Beatrice, my fair and gentle teacher in the faith, to whom I owe my short happiness in this world; and, as I hope, an eternal one in the next, grace be with you, mercy and peace! Let it rejoice you to hear, that when this letter reacheth your hand I shall be at rest in Heaven, no longer walking amid the struggles and vexations of this fleshly scene, but in the presence of angels, fair and good as yourself, awaiting the coming of that happy day, when our bridal shall be kept in the sky, and we shall meet to part no more.

" Most dear and generous Beatrice! I have walked in the ways of the truth, even as you taught it to me, and I am condemned to die for having the Scriptures in my possession. Shall I not cheerfully lay down this fleeting life of woe, for the book that hath given me an eter-

nity of happiness? Yea, verily, and you shall rejoice with me for having done it. By the blood of martyrs was Christianity first established, and by the same blood must it be cemented in this its second advent. Thanks, a thousand thanks, to my dear and noble Beatrice, by whose means I have become a chosen instrument for this great work, and am snatched from the realms of sin and sorrow, to share the beatitude of Heaven.

"Bear not anger with your father for what he hath done. Hath he not made me immortal? Tell him I forgive and pray for him.

"I await your coming in Heaven; till when, wishing you whatever your gentle heart most desireth, I bid you heartily well to fare. My well-beloved, my angelic Beatrice! may all good angels guard you, and the blessings of God remain with you! Amen!—These from your disciple, friend, and lover,

CECIL HUNGERFORD."

This letter he sealed and entrusted to the lieutenant, who undertook to have it carefully

forwarded, and thus having taken a final leave of the world, he prepared himself with calmness and resignation to endure his fate.

While Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice was thus successful in the plot, that was being carried on in London by means of his agents, he had been not less active and prosperous in the equally atrocious conspiracies, which he superintended in his own person, and the scene of whose developement was his own immediate neighbourhood: without seeing Beatrice, against whom he felt an indignant wrath for her daring to oppose herself to his schemes, and stoop to a consideration of the idiot boy, as he still termed Cecil, he had quitted the Tor Hill immediately after his return, and hastened to Farleigh Castle, to take possession of the manors, estates, and wide domains, which had so long formed the patrimony of the elder and noble branch of the Hungerfords, and of which he had now obtained a grant from the King. This place, which was said to have derived its name from the fair leas or meadows that surrounded it, was seated in an uncommonly rich and beautiful

tract, though its principal recommendation in the eyes of Sir Lionel, whose thoughts always reverted to violence, was the great security of the castle, built with uncommon solidity, and seated upon a rocky hill.* Knowing his own unpopularity with the surrounding nobles and gentry, he had always thought it possible that they might form a coalition of their retainers against him, on which account he had been ever careful to keep up the number of his own armed followers; and he now exulted at the thought, that he was provided with a mansion much more susceptible of a regular defence than the Tor House. This recommendation of the place decided him upon making it his permanent residence; and having given orders for such alterations as he believed would render it impregnable, he set off for Wells,

* "Farley Castelle," says Leland, "is sette on a rockky hill. There be divers praty towers in the outer warde, and an ancient chapel. There is a common saying, that one of the Hungerfords built part of the castelle, by the prey of the Duke of Orleans, whom he had taken prisoner." In the chapel may still be seen some curious old monuments of the Hungerfords.

where the arrangements, he had made for the destruction of another of his enemies, demanded his immediate presence.

The consequences of his visit to London, of his frequent interviews with Sir Thomas Cromwell, and of the schemes he had been so long maturing for the overthrow of his most ancient and most hated opponent, the Lord Abbot of Glastonbury, were now to develope themselves. That there should be abuses in some of the monastic institutions, opposed as they were by their primary law to one of the most powerful impulses of our nature, seems natural to expect; that they existed to a tenth part of the extent alleged, there is great reason to doubt. To calumniate first, that you may plunder and destroy afterwards, is an old process of tyranny. Even where the misconduct was manifest, it belonged as much to the times as to the institution; for it will hardly be maintained, that Henry and his ministers were purer in their morality than the monks; nor can it be denied that the suppression, however desirable it might have been on political and religious grounds,

originated in rapacity, was conducted, in many instances, with great cruelty and oppression, and entrusted to agents who, having an immediate interest in the plunder, were totally unscrupulous as to the means they employed. Bribery and intimidation were their common expedients; sometimes a monk was hired to accuse himself of heavy crimes that he might implicate the whole establishment in his guilt. All this had been attempted with the brethren of Glastonbury; but it had been found impossible to fix a stain upon their conduct, and Sir Lionel had directed the whole force of his schemes and conspiracies against the personal character of the abbot.

In consequence of the depositions made by his witnesses before Sir Thomas Cromwell, the Visitor-General, that minister appointed two of his officers to proceed as surveyors to Glastonbury, and inquire into the alleged malversations, with full authority to bring the offender to trial, should the charges against him be substantiated. Having previously made all his arrangements, Sir Lionel met these surveyors

upon their arrival at Wells, and accompanying them in the first instance to the abbot's manor of Sharpham, where they placed him under arrest, they hastened to the abbey to search his study and private cabinet. Here they had not long ferreted amid pardons, copies of bulls, charters, grants, and records of the abbey, when they stumbled upon a book, written by Thomas Abell, clerke, proving the lawfulness of the King's first marriage, which the surveyors declared to be of itself sufficient to cost him his head, and of so much importance, that any further perquisition was unnecessary. Sir Lionel, however, informing them that there was a subterranean passage communicating with the hospital in the town of Glastonbury, built for the use of the pilgrims resorting to the shrine of St. Joseph, and used, as he had been credibly given to understand, for the introduction of improper women into the abbey, they proceeded to examine it. The entrance was secured by a door long since ordered to be locked up by the abbot, who kept the key himself. It was now forced open, and they had no sooner

entered, than they discovered in a recess the automatical clock, which Sir Lionel instantly recognized as the same that had been purloined from his visitor, and pretended to be buried in the church-yard, together with a considerable quantity of the church-plate, which the abbot was of course pronounced to have embezzled for his own use, an additional offence that warranted them in bringing him to an immediate trial.

Without, however, communicating to him their discoveries or their purposes, they summoned him to attend an assembly of the gentry at Wells. He went without delay, and entering the Court, was about to take his seat among the personages of distinction, when the cryer called him to the bar, and bade him answer to the crime of high treason laid to his charge. Bewildered and amazed, the old man looked around him, and asked what might be the meaning of such an accusation; but he was not long kept in suspense, for the surveyors and Sir Lionel gave evidence of the discoveries they had made, placing at the same time upon the table of the court, the interdicted book, and the em-

bezzled plate, and asking what defence he could have the hardihood to use against such irrefragable proofs of his delinquency.

"Sic me Deus adjuvat, et hæc sancta dei evangelia," said the Abbot, laying his hand upon the gospels, when he was interrupted by the Judge, who reminded him that he was not now at his desk, or in the pulpit, but in a court of justice, where he was to speak so that all might understand him. With a solemn and passionate energy, the Lord Abbot then protested his perfect innocence of all the crimes laid to his charge, which he attributed to a foul conspiracy for his ruin, appealing to the whole tenor of his own long life, to the unspotted reputation of his abbey, and finally to God himself for the truth of his averments. Innocence, however, was at that period a poor protection for an abbot, even where it could be much more incontestably proved, than in the case of the unfortunate Richard Whiting. Utterly guiltless, and, indeed, incapable as he was of the crimes alleged against him, he was presently condemned, and sent back to Glastonbury, little

imagining that he was so soon to die. When he came near the walls of the monastery, a priest was presented to him, to hear his confession in the horse-litter that carried him, for they assured him he must die that very hour. The old man, with tears, begged he might have a day or two allowed him to prepare for death; or at least, that going into the monastery, he might recommend himself to his monks, and take his leave; but neither was granted, for being turned out of the horse-litter, and laid upon a hurdle, he was dragged along the ground to the top of the Tor Hill, which overlooks the monastery, where he was hanged in his monk's habit, and quartered.*

* Addition to the Monasticon, by Stevens, who expressly states that the little book against the Divorce, found in the Cabinet, was brought in without Whiting's knowledge by *them that searched,* and gives a detail of the duplicity, fraud, and cruelty, exercised upon the poor old man, which is, perhaps, only a fair sample of the proceedings against other abbeys, and affords a revolting picture of the times. In the official letter of the surveyors, "To the Ryghte Honourable and their syngular good Lord, my Lord Pryvye Seal," (Sir Thomas Cromwell,) they lay a most suspicious stress upon the

A confused and hurried rumour of the intended violence had already flown from mouth to mouth at the abbey, some treating it with incredulity, and some with ridicule, as an outrage that was impossible; but when they actually saw their aged and revered pastor hanging in his robes, with every circumstance that

discovery of the book. "And there of new we proceeded that night to search his study for letters and books; and found in his study, secretly laid, as well a written book of arguments against the divorce of the King's Majestie and the Lady Dowager, which we take to be a great matter; as also divers pardons, copies of bulls, and the counterfyt life of Thomas Bequet, in print. We did not find any letter that was material. And so we proceeded again to his examination, concerning the articles we received from your lordship, in the answers whereof, as we take it, shall appear his cankered and traitorous heart and mind against the King's Majestie and his succession."—"And so, with as fair words as we could, we have conveyed him from hence into the Tower, being but a very weak man, and sickly. This is also to advertise your lordship, that we have found a fair chalice of gold, and divers other parcels of plate, which the Abbot had secretly hid from all such Commissioners as have been there in times past," &c. They conclude their letter, by expressing their admiration of the house, which they say is "meet for the King's Majestie, and no man else."

could render his fate not less ignominious than conspicuous, it is impossible to depict their consternation and horror. Some were struck aghast, and stood transfixed in speechless agony; some groaned and shrieked aloud; some ran wildly to and fro; while others rushed tumultuously towards the place of execution, as if there was still a possibility of arresting his fate. Nor were the country people and peasants, who were collected in considerable numbers at the foot of the hill, less astounded at the appalling spectacle. They had been accustomed to consider the good abbot as nearly omnipotent upon earth, and as almost partaking of a heavenly nature by his virtues and his holiness; and their amazement at seeing him thus executed like the vilest felon, absolutely deprived them for some time of their faculties. They stood gazing alternately at the body, and at the skies above, as if they expected them to open, and punish the authors of this sacrilegious cruelty by some signal and miraculous chastisement. It is probable that they would have joined the monks, and attempted a rescue, could they have

sooner collected their bewildered thoughts; but it was now too late. The good abbot was no more: and that his murder might be accompanied with every possible circumstance of revolting barbarity, his head was nailed up over the abbey-gate, and his quarters sent to Wells, Bath, Ilchester, and Bridgewater.

In all the church-lands that had been hitherto alienated, it had been the King's invariable policy to parcel them out among the rich and powerful, who could defend what they had thus acquired, and prevent all possibility of their reversion to the original owners. While some declined such tenures altogether, as of a sacrilegious nature, and all considered the title of doubtful validity, any adequate consideration for such grants was not to be expected, nor, indeed, did Henry require it. In many cases, they were given for nothing—in others, for a price little better than nominal. Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice was so far a man after the King's own heart, that he was known to be as hostile as himself to the power and possessions of the church; he had been the chief instrument in

effecting the downfal of the abbot; and he was therefore rewarded with a large grant of the confiscated lands, upon payment of such an unimportant sum as rendered this accession to his already overgrown domains nearly tantamount to a free gift. In the pride and rapacity of his heart he had declared, that he should never rest satisfied until all the manors that he could survey in the direction of the abbey should become his property. By this extensive grant his wish was nearly fulfilled, and he already began to look forward to the day when it would receive its total accomplishment.

These events had occurred during the first days of Cecil's imprisonment in London; and the same letters, that brought Sir Lionel the intelligence of this enormous addition to his possessions, conveyed to him the not less welcome tidings that his ward had been condemned to death, and would have ceased to exist before the present dispatches could reach his hands. At the moment of their arrival, Sir Lionel was at the Tor House; his bosom

swelled with exultation and triumph, as he read; and, taking the papers in his hand, he stalked forth with even more than his usual stateliness of manner to the elevated terrace. "It is mine," he exclaimed to himself, as he stamped his foot upon the ground—"this mansion is mine,—all that I survey is mine—legally mine—beyond the malice or the caprice of fate. And the far-spreading manors of Farleigh are mine, and its embattled castle is mine, where I may laugh to scorn the collected power of all my enemies! Ha! ha! Did I not swear that I would be revenged upon man, and have I not kept my oath? I have made him my puppet, my plaything, my slave, until it pleased me to make him my victim. The King of the Valley has fallen before me, and I am now the sole monarch of all these spacious domains; their tyrant, if it so please my subjects: I desire no better name. Where is the man that now dares to call himself mine enemy? let me see him, that I may send him to join his predecessors. Where are ye, my Lord Dawbeney, Sir Launcelot Wallop, and

Master Trevor? Where are you, my Lord Abbot of Glastonbury? Where is the treacherous wife that sought her husband's blood? Where is the idiot boy who was to dispossess him of his mansions and estates? What, ho! Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, of the Tor Hill, and of Farleigh Castle, calls upon ye. Arise! cast off your shrouds! look up out of your graves, and behold the triumph of the man whom ye thought to conquer! What! are ye all dumb? Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

The sardonic laugh with which he terminated this rhapsody of exultation, imparted an almost fiend-like expression to his features: placing his right hand upon the hilt of his sword, he looked round him with an air of fierce defiance, as if ready to encounter even the ghosts of those whom he had invoked; and in this menacing attitude he slowly marched back again into the Tor House.

CHAPTER IX.

Build up thy tower of guilt and might,
And climb upon its topmost height,
Thy maker scorning;—
From that exalted summit hurl'd,
So shalt thou offer to the world
More signal warning.

Leaving Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice for the present to the enjoyment of his grandeur, which had now reached its topmost height, although his insatiable ambition was already urging him to further schemes of advancement, we must request our readers to accompany us to Throgmorton Street, in the City of London, where Sir Thomas Cromwell had already become sufficiently enriched by the King's favour and his own rapacity, to construct a magnificent man-

sion.* Here, with a somewhat ostentatious hospitality, he directed bread, meat, and drink, to be served out twice a day, at his gate, to about two hundred poor persons; and here, with less suspicious motives, he expended part of his treasures in the cultivation of a fair and goodly garden, stocked with rare exotics, and fruits and flowers, which, however common now, were then new to the English soil. The musk-rose, and several sorts of plums, which he himself had first brought from Italy, currants, then first introduced from the Island of Zante, pippins rivalling those at Plumstead in Sussex, and the damask-rose, imported a few years before by Dr. Linacre, the King's physician, and various esculent herbs and vegetables, such as few other gardens could exhibit, were all to be

* On this site Draper's Hall and Gardens now stand. As an instance of the unceremonious manner in which great men proceeded in those days, as well as of the miserable tenements which a certain rank of people inhabited, it may be mentioned that the father of Stow, the historian, possessing a house which interfered with Sir Thomas's plans, he arbitrarily loosened it from its place, set it upon rollers, and had it carried twenty-two feet farther off, without giving the least notice.

seen flourishing together in this collection of hortulan rarities.

Sir Thomas was walking amidst his fruits and flowers, giving orders to his gardeners, or to the workmen completing his mansion, which he occasionally stopped to survey with a proud satisfaction, when he was informed that a person in a monk's garb wished to speak with him, but declined giving his name. "Let him wait upon me in the garden," said Sir Thomas, who had exercised such a despotic power over the whole order, that he thought it unnecessary to treat any of its members with much respect. This direction was obeyed, and a stranger presently approached, whose large hood, drawn up over his head as if to conceal him, could not hide the forbidding character of his features, which, in conjunction with his dark robes, offered a curious contrast to the smiling flowers among which he moved, and rendered his general appearance any thing rather than prepossessing. Sir Thomas desired him to state the purport of his visit, and to do it quickly, as he should shortly be obliged to wait upon the

King's grace at Whitehall; but the stranger declaring that his communication was of a most important and confidential nature, which could not be safely made in an open garden, he was conducted by Sir Thomas into a private cabinet, the door of which was carefully locked, and he then proceeded to divulge his secret.

This personage was no other than Father Barnabas, who has been slightly mentioned in the earlier part of our work, as enjoying to a certain extent the confidence of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, and forming the sole spiritual authority at the Tor House. His interference, however, had been by no means confined to religious matters, as he had been actively though secretly employed in many of the machinations which we have had occasion to describe. When Sir Lionel, observing the superstition and credulity by which his own neighbourhood was more especially characterized, had determined to avail himself of these materials for establishing a belief in his supernatural powers, and procuring himself to be feared as a dæmon, since he could not be reverenced as a deity, he had

looked around him for some fitting instrument, who, while his station placed him beyond the reach of suspicion, might be tempted to become his colleague in terrifying and deluding the vicinity. On account of some irregularity, Father Barnabas had at that period been publicly reprimanded by the abbot, and dispossessed of his Treasurer's office,—a disgrace which, operating upon a vindictive and vicious character, inspired him with a deadly hatred towards its author, and determined him to seek revenge by every possible means. Of these circumstances Sir Lionel no sooner became possessed, than his keen insight into character immediately pointed out this man as the most likely person to become his agent for the purposes we have mentioned, especially if they could be rendered subservient to that object which they both equally desired —the destruction of the abbot. He accordingly sought an interview with him; and by pretending to be deeply indignant at his unmerited removal from office, which he attributed to the personal hostility of his superior, while he promised him the whole support of his purse, power,

and influence, to have him made the abbot's successor, could they once succeed in getting rid of him, he so flattered his auditor's pride and thirst of vengeance, that he soon converted him into as willing and unprincipled a tool as even his own flagitious heart could have desired.

A league offensive and defensive was forthwith concluded between them, according to one of whose minor provisions the father had become one of the conspirators against Cecil's reason, by terrifying him with the most dreadful denunciations of infamy in this world, and eternal torture in the next, as soon as he learnt his disbelief in the Book of Legends. This, however, was but a secondary employment. It was a maxim with Sir Lionel, that to be thought the possessor of superior power, was to have it, and that fear was the surest foundation of greatness. Acting upon this principle, he adopted every measure that could procure him the reputation of being a dabbler in the occult sciences, a pursuer of impious and forbidden studies, one who for some unholy and horrible consider-

ation had formed a direct alliance with the Powers of Darkness, and was supported by their secret agency. His laboratory, with all its strange apparatus, tended to countenance this notion, which he confirmed by much less equivocal manifestations, through the collusion of Father Barnabas, assisted by his own crafty mummery. Foreseeing the approach of a thunder-storm, he had directed him to steal covertly to the abbot's grange and set it on fire — a service which he willingly executed to inflict a loss upon his hated superior, while Sir Lionel, arrayed in long robes and wielding a wand, had appeared, to the terrified rustics who surrounded Dudley at Hollowstone Point, to be giving orders to the elements, and to direct the lightning against the possessions of his enemy. It was Father Barnabas who had secretly and sacrilegiously contrived that the curtain before the image of Our Lady, and the large silver crucifix in the abbey church, should fall prostrate, when Sir Lionel, joining the minstrels' procession, had approached to make his offering; an apparently supernatural portent which

had been arranged between them, not only to support the knight's assumed character, but to constitute a future charge against the abbot, as a deceiver of the people, and a getter up of false miracles. After such an occurrence, Sir Lionel thought he might safely assume to himself the power of evoking devils; and it will excite little wonder that Will Mattock, at the time of his examination, should be terrified into submission by a threat of such an alarming nature, coming from one who appeared so capable of enforcing it.

It was Father Barnabas, who, after having buried the automatical clock in the manner formerly described, had dug it up again in the night-time, and, secreting it during the intervening period, had finally conveyed it, as concerted with Sir Lionel, into the subterranean passage, of which he had purloined the key, and where he had also deposited the church plate discovered by the surveyors. It was the same worthy coadjutor who had received from Sir Lionel, and concealed in the abbot's study, the interdicted book on the subject of the

King's marriage; and finally, it was from him also that Sir Lionel had so quickly received a copy of the letter to Cardinal Wolsey, which his superior had given him to transcribe into the register of the abbey.

Revenge generally dies in the fruition, and becomes converted into remorse. This man, who without a single scruple or compunction had so long and so pertinaciously followed up these deep-laid schemes for the abbot's destruction, stipulating, for nothing but that he should not be brought forward upon his trial, lest it might interfere with his advancement to the vacant office, had stood suddenly conscience-stricken and appalled, when he so unexpectedly beheld him hanging on the top of the Tor Hill. All his vindictive feelings died within him, and the pangs of his self-accusation were only alleviated by the hope that he had not been guilty for nothing, but that by the promised assistance of Sir Lionel, and his known influence with the King, he might become the successor of his victim. When, however, the immediate suppression of the monastery dissipated these

dreams, and he became haunted with that most stinging of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain, he fell into a depression of soul that excited the apprehensions of the watchful Sir Lionel. The knight offered him a share of his own plunder, as some compensation for his disappointment; but ambition and revenge, not avarice, had been the besetting sins of Father Barnabas: he declined the proffered reward; and from that moment Sir Lionel, considering him a dangerous character from his possession of so many secrets, and as one, moreover, who was no longer necessary to his purposes, resolved upon his immediate destruction.

Some of his preliminary measures for this purpose came accidentally to the Father's knowledge, roused him from his lethargy, and rekindling all his smothered feelings of hatred, directed them against his perfidious and sanguinary ally. He was not of a character to become a tame unresisting victim; he knew his antagonist, for such he now considered him, to be as quick in the execution, as he was fertile

in the conception, of mischief; and lulling his suspicions, by declaring that he was going to the sea-side for the recovery of his shattered health, he set off instantly for London, and travelling day and night without the smallest intermission, arrived at the capital, and betook himself to Sir Thomas Cromwell's residence. Notwithstanding the cautious and suspicious vigilance of Sir Lionel, he had not been able, in the course of their long-continued intercourse, to prevent Father Barnabas from obtaining certain documents and vouchers, some of them in his own hand-writing, which incontestably established the nature of the conspiracy in which they had been jointly engaged. As wary and wily as his accomplice, the monk had lost no opportunity of secreting such papers, for his own ultimate security; and he had taken good care to carry them with him when he fled from Somersetshire.

Having first stipulated for his own pardon, in consideration of betraying his brother-conspirator, he placed these proofs of his allegations in the hands of Sir Thomas Cromwell,

and then entered into a full exposition of the nefarious projects, in which he had been jointly engaged with Sir Lionel for the destruction of the abbot; stating in addition the knight's manifold abuses of his power as a guardian, his various machinations to derange the reason of his ward, the artifices he had employed to fix upon him the character of mental imbecility, and, finally, the manifest motives with which he had procured him to be condemned as a heretic, that he might obtain legal possession of the estates which he had so long usurped.

A single glance at the documents sufficed to convince Cromwell, who was well acquainted with Sir Lionel's hand-writing, of their authenticy; and his first apprehension was the possibility, that through these disclosures he might become implicated by the unjust sentence pronounced upon the abbot. By immediately revealing the whole circumstances to the King, however, he doubted not that he should be cleared from all responsibility upon this score; and he had no sooner satisfied himself as to his own safety, than his thoughts reverted to

Cecil, whose execution was fixed for the following morning. From the first he had taken an interest in his fate; the present communication, by showing the grievous wrongs he had sustained and the villanous motives of his prosecutor, strengthened this prepossession; and he determined not to stint any effort he could safely make, for procuring an immediate reprieve and final remission of his sentence. Feeling the importance of the intelligence, and the necessity for dispatch, he suggested that the monk should forthwith accompany him in his barge to Westminster, that the King himself might be immediately possessed of his tidings,—a proposition to which Father Barnabas, in the hope of obtaining the royal promise for his pardon, gave a willing assent.

They proceeded accordingly to the river-side, where Sir Thomas's boat, with his bargemen in rich liveries, were in waiting; and in due time disembarked at Wolsey's former palace, which had now taken the name of Whitehall, or the King's Manor of Westminster. Here the monk was ushered into a waiting-room, while his com-

panion proceeded to the King's closet, where he was always a welcome visitant, since he generally came to announce some new spoliation committed on the overgrown possessions of the church. At the moment of his entrance, Henry, in deep conversation with his tailor, had just tried on the dress of a Saracen, in which he was to appear at a grand masque to be given that night at the Court, and which had been rendered as grim and gorgeous as all the talents of the artist could compass. Waving his hand for the wielder of the shears to withdraw, he sate himself down in his paynim garb, with which his face assorted much better than his figure, to receive the communication of his visitant, listening to it with sufficient attention to catch its entire purport, although he was employed at the same time in turning over some other fancy-dresses which had been brought for inspection. As to any commiseration for the innocent abbot, so cruelly sacrificed, such a thought never once crossed his mind. His predominant, indeed his sole, feeling was indignation that he himself should be imposed upon and defrauded out of

a large grant of the abbey lands by the collusion of two juggling knaves; under the influence of which impression he started upon his legs, exclaiming, in wrathful accents—"Ha! what! has the villanous bastard dared to play me false? now, by Saint Mary! had he as many heads as the hydra, they shall leap from the traitor's shoulders. Let him be seized and brought to London. He shall die upon the Tower Hill as a warning to all cankered perjurers; ha!"

"Your Grace's orders shall be obeyed," said Sir Thomas; "and, touching this monk to whom we owe the knowledge of these misdeeds, I have ventured to promise that your Highness should pardon ——"

"Say'st thou, man? Pardon him! How durst thou utter the word, ha?—What!—See that he be had to prison, and kept in safe custody. By Saint Paul! he shall swing at Tyburn upon his own confession. 'Tis but to rid the world of a rogue, which is well—and of a monk, which is better still."

"Even as it seemeth best to the wisdom and pleasure of the King's Grace," replied Sir

Thomas, with a profound homage—" and concerning this innocent youth, it may like your Grace to understand that I have had speech of him, and, sooth to say, he seems to be but of weak wit and infirm, or he would not have fallen into this snare."

" Why then, good master Privy Seal, let the boy be reprieved. There be fools enow in the world without him; but let that pass. The Hungerfords were ever a bold and loyal race; his father was a stout man-at-arms, by the same token that he once broke his sword upon my scull-cap at a jousting at Greenwich; and, by my faith! the simple gull, his son, seems to have had foul wrong done him. Hearest thou me, ha? Away then, and do it: and send me quick the tailor to unharness me. This Saracen's gear likes me not; it is some deal too hot and heavy."

Sir Thomas hastened out of the closet, and dispatched the tradesman to reconvert his master from a barbarian to a Christian king, so far as that process could be effected by divesting him of his external trappings; when he

proceeded to Father Barnabas, who was not a little appalled at finding he was to be kept a close prisoner. Although Cromwell had no faith whatever in his own assurances, he declared that it was only a precautionary measure to secure him as a witness against Sir Lionel, after whose punishment the King's well-known clemency would doubtless be extended towards him. Leaving him to the consolation of this equivocal phrase, he saw him safely bestowed in prison; and having made the gaoler responsible for his secure custody, proceeded to execute the further orders he had received respecting the King of the Hill.

Backed as was the warrant for his apprehension with the royal signature, Sir Thomas knew enough of his desperate character, to doubt his yielding it a ready obedience, if he had time to prepare for resistance; and he therefore directed the sheriff of Somersetshire, to whom he forwarded it, to preserve all possible secrecy as to its object, and, taking with him a small force that would excite no suspicion, to endeavour to surprise Sir Lionel,

and send him up to London with a proper guard. That vigilant personage, however, was not easily to be taken unawares. One of his retainers in London having accidentally seen Father Barnabas and the Lord Privy Seal disembark and enter the King's palace, hurried off with the intelligence to his master, whose quick penetration soon enabled him to detect the object of this visit, and to discover the full extent of the danger with which he was menaced. Never had he before been placed in such imminent jeopardy: but he was familiar with peril, accustomed to success, confident in his own resources; and he trusted that by fraud and subtlety, perjury and bribery, he should triumph over this difficulty, as he had done over so many others equally menacing.

At the moment of his receiving this information, he was at the Tor House, where he immediately retired into his own apartment, to consider what course to adopt in the first instance, giving previous orders that the gates should be kept closed, and a double guard be stationed at the gate-house. Scarcely had

these commands been obeyed, when the sheriff and his party of horsemen galloped up to the principal entrance, expecting to enter without resistance, and carry the place by a *coup de main*. To their great mortification, they found every thing prepared for resistance; and the sheriff was fain to send in his warrant peaceably, and summon Sir Lionel to surrender in the King's name. Instead of obeying this mandate, he tore the paper into fragments, which he scattered to the air, ordered the alarum-bell to be rung to collect his people, and drawing his sword, rushed to the causeway, from whose walls he warned the sheriff to draw off his followers, or expect a volley of arrows and bullets. The party thus addressed, who was a resolute man, treated these threats as idle gasconades, imagining that Sir Lionel would never be desperate enough to oppose the King's warrant by open violence; and, observing that the walls of the causeway were so choked up outside by rubbish that had been thrown over, and shrubs reaching up to their summit, as to present an easy escalade, he commanded

his men to dismount, and storm the causeway before the rest of the party within could be armed and collected.

This order he was himself the first to obey. Leaping from his horse, he ran up the shelving bank; and clinging to the branches of a tree, clambered to the top of a wall, calling out repeatedly—"In the King's name! in the King's name!"—but his exclamations were presently silenced, for Sir Lionel, rushing to the spot, clove his skull with a single blow of his terrific sword; his body tumbled backward amid the crushing boughs and underwood, and two of his followers were at the same instant killed by a volley from the walls. The rest of his party, dismayed by the fate of their companions, and the loss of their leader, hastily remounted their horses and galloped off, leaving the dead bodies of the sheriff and his two men lying beneath the wall, while the fugitives were pursued by a shout of victory from the little garrison collected on the causeway.

All this, occurring upon the hasty impulse of

the moment, had scarcely occupied more time in the transacting than in recording it; but when Sir Lionel was left to his cooler considerations, he saw much to regret in the misadventure. It was no part of his cautious policy thus to throw down the gauntlet against his monarch; there would have been many methods of evading obedience, without defying the King's power, and slaying the sheriff of the county bearing his sign-manual; and he foresaw the necessity of much perjury for throwing the whole blame on that officer's intemperance, and attributing his death to mistake or accident. He relied, however, upon that good fortune which had ever favoured him at his utmost need, trusting also with a blind confidence to his own sagacity, just at the moment when it was beginning to desert him. He was, in fact, intoxicated with success, giddy with the elevation to which he had attained: he began even to believe his own fictions, to imagine that he was indeed protected by supernatural aid, and bore "a charmed life;" in short, to exhibit all

the symptoms of that dementation with which the Fates afflict those whom they have determined to ruin.

A circumstance was now about to occur, that gave a rapid developement to this inordinate self-conceit. Born and bred in the old system of faith, to which they were attached by their interests as well as habits, the common people had not remained passive spectators of the attempt to supersede it, accompanied as it was by cruelty and rapacity of every sort; and their irritation was more especially prevalent in those districts where the monasteries had been suppressed, whose munificent charities and extensive hospitality had been their chief resource. Seeing nothing in the new religion to compensate the loss of these temporal advantages, and disappointed in the benefits, which had been so lavishly promised to all ranks, as the immediate result of dissolving the religious houses and seizing their possessions, the people had in various quarters broken out into open insurrections. These discontents had in some instances extended to the nobility and gentry, whose an-

cestors had founded the pious institutions, and who saw themselves thus deprived of the certain provision which they afforded for their younger children; while the more superstitious felt a great alarm for the souls of their forefathers, which, without masses to relieve them, must now remain for many ages subject to all the inconveniences of purgatory. Many of these personages of distinction had joined the insurgents, whose tumultuary armies, sometimes numbering from twenty to forty thousand men, had, in several instances, become so formidable as to threaten the total subversion of the monarchy.

Hitherto, however, they had all been ultimately dispersed; but, at the period of which we are writing, a new rebellion broke out in the west, of a still more threatening character than any of those that had preceded it. Some of its leaders, who were men of rank and consideration, knowing the military talents of Sir Lionel, and the number of retainers he could bring into the field, invited him to join them; holding out at the same time such prospects of

success, and giving him such a list of promised adherents among the nobility and gentry, that he was persuaded they would constitute an irresistible force, and carry all before them. He reflected, moreover, that he was so deeply compromised with the King as to implicate his life: from this difficulty the most effectual method of extracting himself was by dethroning, or at least mastering, the monarch, who had presumed to order him up to London for punishment; there was something flattering to his pride in the very thought; in the event of their carrying their point, it was impossible to say what eminence he himself might attain, if he put himself forward among the revolters; and, believing that sound policy called upon him to abandon his usual system of caution, and take a bold and decided step, he marshalled his followers, who were all willing to share his fortune, whatever it might be, and marched at their head to the place of rendezvous.

Here every thing wore the appearance of warlike bustle, and all was enthusiasm and

confidence; the whole neighbourhood was up in arms, and had the rest of the country been equally active, nothing could have withstood their united numbers. But though the feeling of discontent was so widely diffused, the insurrection was only partial and local; while its menacing aspect in this particular focus, only served to deceive those who assumed it as a specimen of the whole kingdom. Nothing, indeed, was wanting, that could inspire confidence in the better class, or operate upon the superstitious feelings of the multitude. Like their predecessors, in the enterprize called the *Pilgrimage of Grace*, priests marched at their head, carrying crosses in their hands; in their banners was woven a crucifix, with the representation of a chalice, and of the five wounds of Christ, of which they also wore an emblem on their sleeves, with the name of Jesus wrought in the middle; and they were all bound together by an oath. The sanction, and the sacred symbols of these holy persons, exerted a powerful influence over the commonalty; but that upon which they principally relied, was the

supernatural assistance that was to be afforded to them by a woman!

Undeterred by the fate of the *Holy Maid of Kent*, who had set herself up some time before as a prophetess and a worker of miracles, a poor enthusiastic girl started forth from some obscure valley in Somersetshire as her successor, quickly acquiring such a reputation, that she was invited by the leaders of the present insurrection to join their banners, and bestow upon their enterprise the sanction of her miraculous powers. No imputation of knavery could attach to this woman, as in the instance of her Kentish predecessor; it was a case of honest simple delusion; and she joined the insurgents in the full persuasion, that she had been called upon by Heaven to lead them to victory and restore the ancient faith,—a conviction which soon extended itself to her armed companions. The name of the English Joan was bestowed upon her; every one predicted that she would rival the exploits of her French namesake; and the confidence, as well as the number of her fol-

lowers, increased every day, and almost every hour.

In this sanguine and overweening mood, they learned, with exultation rather than alarm, that the Duke of Norfolk was marching against them with a body of regular troops, and they demanded with loud cries to be led forth to meet him, —a call with which it was held prudent to comply, lest their enthusiasm should have time to cool. As one of the most experienced commanders among them, Sir Lionel would have now put himself forward to direct their movements; but the blind and besotted multitude would listen to no orders but those issued by English Joan, whose generalship consisted in desiring them to march on, and fear nothing while she remained at their head. In this confused manner they advanced without any diminution of courage, until, upon gaining a gentle eminence, they beheld the Duke's forces, constituting an insignificant body of horse and foot, drawn up in the valley beneath them. Now it was that Sir Lionel, feeling convinced

that by a little management the hostile band might be surrounded and exterminated, insisted upon the command being given to himself, or to some other military person equally qualified for the office. But he might as well have spoken to the winds and waves. The female general, too much elated by her new dignity willingly to resign it, and really believing herself to be commisioned by Heaven, bade her followers still march on, and they should see their enemies destroyed before their faces by fire and thunderbolts from the sky; and the multitude, conceiving it safer to follow a Heaven-appointed leader than an ordinary mortal, blindly obeyed her orders.

Arrayed in white garments, holding a palm-branch in her hand, and chanting some monkish canticle, she advanced undismayed, until at the first volley from the royal troops she received a wound, and fell screaming to the ground. In a moment, however, she arose, her white robes stained with blood, and flourishing her palm-branch, once more staggered forward until struck by a second bullet, when

she again fell, and was no more seen, though her loud shrieks rang shrilly in the air. The dismal sound sent a thrill of dismay to the very heart's core of her followers; and one of those sudden panics, to which a tumultuary army is so peculiarly liable, infecting the whole mass, they threw down their arms as if with one accord and fled in all directions with an indescribable confusion and terror.

A pang of wrath and bitter anguish shot through the bosom of Sir Lionel at the sight. He beheld all his hopes annihilated in a moment: he disdained flight; he knew that nothing could be effected by his own little band, which still remained staunch and unbroken; he anticipated no mercy if he were taken; and, in this hasty counsel with his own thoughts, he at length decided upon retiring with his followers to Farleigh Castle, where he would be safe for the present, and might await some more fortunate contingency. The Duke of Norfolk, however, who, from observing the better bearing and array of his troop, concluded that it belonged to some leaders of the insurrection, had

detached a company of horse to intercept his retreat,—an object in which their leader completely succeeded. Willing to spare an unnecessary effusion of blood, he rode forward towards Sir Lionel, exhibiting a small white flag, and calling out that quarter would be granted to all who surrendered.—"I accept such quarter as I give!" cried Sir Lionel fiercely; and, at the same time rushing forward, he struck the officer from his horse, and dispatched him by repeated blows while he was upon the ground.

At the sight of this savage treachery, the soldiers clapped spurs to their horses, and galloped forward with loud cries to avenge their commander; while Sir Lionel's followers, seeing the utter hopelessness of the contest, dispersed with the utmost precipitation, leaving their master unsupported. Deserted as he was, his natural ferocity became inflamed by desperation, while his almost superhuman strength enabled him not only to defend himself against the foremost of his assailants, but to stretch the greater number of them lifeless at his feet. No

tiger standing at bay against his pursuers ever made more fierce, terrific, and convulsive efforts. But as the remainder of the troops came up, he was surrounded on all sides; and fighting with the same fury to the last, he at length fell lifeless to the earth, pierced with innumerable wounds.

CONCLUSION.

Reader! who hast unto their end
Perused our chapters, whether penn'd
Gravely or gaily,
Think that the author, ere we part,
Sends thee a blessing from his heart:—
"Salve et Vale!"

Her father having set off for Farleigh Castle immediately after dispatching Cecil as a prisoner to London, Beatrice remained for some time in the most torturing suspense as to the fate of her lover; for the remaining servants were either really ignorant of his destination and their master's intentions respecting him, or else afraid to divulge them. After the first burst of grief, however, she awaited Sir Lionel's return, which was announced from day to day, with a comparative degree of patience, determined to ex-

postulate with him, as soon as she could obtain an interview, upon his violent and unjust conduct towards his unhappy ward; to point out to him the utter falsehood of his imputed imbecility; to declare her solemn resolution never to marry any other; to state the generous propositions that had been made by Cecil; to enforce the policy as well as the duty of acceding to his wishes; and finally, to implore her father, as he valued his own safety and the happiness of his child, not to throw away this chance of reconciling all parties, and yet preserving his own power and authority. To his sense of justice, or even to his paternal feelings, she had too much reason to believe that all appeal would be unavailing; but to his self-interest, to his calculations of policy, and above all, to the offered surrender of the Tor House, she confidently trusted for the success of her suit. In the impetuosity of his first feelings, she believed that Sir Lionel could never have properly weighed the advantages, that would result to himself from the proposed union; and as she adverted to the alarming responsibility, that he had in-

curred by the abuse of his power as a guardian, she became not less anxious upon his account, than her own and Cecil's, that he should accept the proffered compromise, and ensure safety to himself while he conferred happiness upon them. By placing all these benefits in a clear light before him, she thought it impossible that he should continue to oppose their wishes; and in this belief she prolonged the patience, with which she had been expecting his return, though it had been now deferred much beyond the day originally fixed.

But when the arrival at the Tor House of one of the servants who had accompanied Cecil discovered to her the infamous plot that had been laid against his life, and that he had been left a prisoner in the Tower of London, the intelligence again excited outbreakings of indignant passion, to which she had been formerly subject. Love, grief, rage, and horror, assailed her bosom at the same moment; and in this convulsive strife of the passions, she could only express her agony by repeated shrieks, until exhausted nature sought relief in a fit. When

she recovered, the ungovernable violence of her emotion had subsided, and she had re-obtained the command of her feelings; but she remained plunged in a depth of mental anguish, the more intense, because she was now calm enough to perceive the full extent of her misery, from which she saw no possible method of extrication. A thousand times, and ever with increasing self-reproach, did she accuse herself as the author of Cecil's imprisonment, and possibly of his death. It was the avowal of her love for him that had driven Sir Lionel to this horrible expedient: she it was, who had instilled into him the heretical opinions of which he stood charged; she it was, who had presented to him the book, whose possession was to entail destruction upon his head. To her present distempered feelings, the innocence, the exalted purity of her motives, afforded no palliation of her offence. She had occasioned the death of her lover! This horrible idea haunted her mind with an almost maddening pertinacity, and filled her with a remorse that knew no respite.

Suddenly the thought occurred to her, that

there was still time to save him—that her interference might even now arrest his fate; and accusing herself for not having sooner adverted to this possibility, she started up with the intention of setting off instantly to London, resolved to lay down her own life, if necessary, to save that of Cecil. She would throw herself at the King's feet, and supplicate mercy—she would reveal her own share in the offence of which her lover stood charged—she would divulge the foul iniquitous plot, of which he was the victim, and the base motives in which it had originated. — A moment's reflection convinced her that such a proceeding would be fraught with the most imminent peril. After the message that the King had sent her by Dudley, the sight of her might serve to rekindle his smothered passion; in which event, to proclaim Cecil her lover, would be only to give an order for his death with her own tongue; for he of whom it had been said, that he never spared woman in his lust, nor man in his wrath, would be little likely, under the influence of both these passions, to extend compassion to

herself and Cecil. Even if she sought to reveal the conspiracy against her lover, without exposing herself to the King's observation, how could she do so, and not deeply, dangerously, perhaps fatally, implicate her father? Was she to be so absorbed in the remembrance of Cecil, as to forget her own parent? Was she to commit parricide, that she might save her lover? Even if she were to succeed in this guilty project, could she expect a moment's happiness with him, after she had thus impiously sacrificed the author of her being upon the altar of love?—Oh! no, no, no!—she shuddered at the revolting thought, and drove it from her mind with loathing.

But although it seemed impossible to save Cecil's life—although every thing repelled the fond hope of her ever being enabled to live with him in this world—she might at least share his fate, and bear him company to the next. To this no duty was opposed; to this she was solicited by every impulse of her heart. She might, perhaps, soothe his hour of death, while to herself would be a sweetness to share it with him. She would avow her participation in

all his heresies, in all his offences, and insist upon undergoing the same penalty as himself. No sooner had this thought occurred to her, than she set about the execution of her purpose with her accustomed promptitude and energy. Not even communicating her intentions to Lady Fitzmaurice, lest any attempt should be made to frustrate them, she desired the aged groom, who had accompanied her from London, to get ready the horses; and entrusting to him a small valise, with a sufficient stock of money, and such requisites as might be wanted on the road, she quitted the Tor House, and rode rapidly forward in the direction of London.

In the evening of this day, while she was consulting her attendant, as to where they should stop to refresh their horses, they met one of Sir Lionel's servants, who immediately made up to them, declaring that he came from London, and was the bearer of a letter which he was specially charged to put into Mistress Fitzmaurice's own hands. This man had been one of Cecil's escort; and the lieutenant of the Tower, understanding that he had been ordered back

into Somersetshire, had entrusted to him the letter he had received from his prisoner, pledging him to deliver it into no other hands than those of Beatrice, to whom it was addressed, and ensuring his fidelity by a handsome gratuity. With a trembling hand did she break the seal, and with a palpitating heart did she read the fatal scroll, whose effect upon her feelings was not less electrical than the first communication she had received, although it was unmarked by the same external violence. Hitherto she had been sustained by a faint and undefined hope that her presence might effect some change in his fate, she knew not what; or at all events, that she might have the consolation of being his companion in death. But now, when she saw that it was too late—that it was all over—her faculties seemed suddenly withered, and her heart broken within her. The letter dropped from her hand, the colour fled from her cheeks, her eyes closed, she fainted, and would have fallen from her horse, had not her attendant, who had observed her illness, hastened to support her.

By the assistance of the other servant, she was dismounted and placed upon the grass, her companions looking on with a mute bewilderment, and both being equally ignorant what measures to adopt for bringing her to herself. After some time, however, she heaved a deep sigh, and slowly recovered her senses; when her first inquiry was, what had become of the letter. She repeatedly perused it in silence, without shedding a tear or betraying any visible emotion, for a deep despair had given momentary calmness to her feelings. After holding a short consultation with her own sad thoughts, she desired Sir Lionel's servant to pursue his journey; and remounting her horse, informed her own attendant that it was her purpose to proceed to Bath, from which city they were not very far distant. Here she betook herself to a nunnery, which she had occasionally visited with Lady Fitzmaurice, one of whose poor relations was an inmate of the place, and informed the Superior that she entered the house with the intention of making her profession, and taking the veil as one of her

regular nuns. — "Alas! my daughter," exclaimed the abbess, "you are welcome to our sisterhood, so long as we have a roof to cover our heads. We have been hitherto spared, because our revenues are too small to tempt the spoiler; but the besom of destruction is abroad which threateneth to sweep every house of holiness from the land, and how long we may escape is only known to Him whose poor and frail servants we are."

"At least, good mother," said Beatrice, "you can afford me a present asylum, until I have made those irrevocable vows, which will for ever bar every earthly claimant from seeking my hand. My hopes are buried; my heart is in the grave; I have done with this world; I am the affianced spouse of one who is waiting for me in Heaven, of one who——"

Her heart melted as her thoughts reverted to Cecil: at the idea of rejoining him in the skies her despair gave way; and, the tension in which her feelings had been hitherto suspended being now relaxed, her head sank upon the bosom of

the abbess, she heaved two or three hysterical sighs, and at length found relief in a burst of tears.

The abbess willingly acceding to all her wishes, Beatrice assumed the white veil of a novice, and immediately commenced those preliminary observances which are prescribed to dedicated nuns, anxious to qualify herself as quickly as possible for taking the oaths, and shutting herself out altogether from a world that she now loathed. It was her daily, almost her hourly, occupation to read over Cecil's letter, that by the magnanimity of his sentiments she might at once fortify her present resolution, and derive consolation from the prospect of being reunited to him in the skies. When compared with him, all other men seemed to fade into insignificance. So gentle, and yet so heroic; a humanity so sensitive to the sufferings of others, with so much fortitude to endure them in his own person; so much sweetness combined with courage; so much humility with majesty! where, where could she hope to find a parallel to his character upon earth;

and when, oh, when! would the happy day arrive that she might rejoin him in the skies?

Thus did she ejaculate to herself, as, with her hands, one of which held his letter, crossed upon her bosom, and her eyes fixed upon the ground, she walked forth with the rest of the nuns into the fields of Bath Valley, whither the abbess was accustomed to conduct them on the summer evenings to enjoy the cool air. Her little procession was increased by several young ladies, sent to her for the completion of their education; and the whole party, dispersing themselves beneath the shade of a clump of trees, sate down to their different employments. Some had brought with them their rocks and wheels for spinning, others betook themselves to small frames of embroidery, while the greater number of the sisterhood chanted together the vesper hymn—their voices, as they paused between every verse, seeming to be wafted upwards, and to die away in the air in soft and distant cadences.

Beatrice had fixed her eyes upon the sun, setting amid a rich pavilion of gold and purple

clouds. Several little detached masses, of exquisite brightness, were hovering over the subsiding luminary, and she was fancifully indulging the idea that Cecil, in a state of beatitude, might be floating about upon one of those islands of light, to behold the glorious evolutions of Nature's magnificent pageant, when her reveries were interrupted by a sudden confusion among her companions, several of whom hurried past her, as if avoiding the approach of a stranger. Looking quickly round, to discover the cause of their alarm, she saw a figure running rapidly towards her: her eyes were rivetted to him as he approached; and, in a moment after, uttering a loud cry of astonishment and joy, she fell fainting into the arms of her lover!

Yes; it was Cecil Hungerford, who, having obtained a pardon through the representations of Sir Thomas Cromwell, had hastened into Somersetshire; and guessing Beatrice's purpose, from the asylum she had chosen, of which he had been apprised by her dismissed attendant, had hurried to Bath, with all the velocity of

rekindled hope and affection, to prevent the pronouncing of her vows, and claim his affianced wife. Leaving these delighted lovers for the present to explain to one another the circumstances that led to their unexpected meeting, and to enjoy those rapturous felicitations, that ecstasy of the soul, which it could not fail to elicit, and which it would be impossible to describe,—we shall proceed to notice some of the other personages introduced into our little history, before we take our final leave of the reader.

He will think, we fear, that we have too long neglected Dudley, considering the prominent station he occupied in our former chapters. We left him enacting the part of a courtier; in which office he so quickly ingratiated himself into the favour of the King, as to be invited to all the court-banquets and festivals. At one of these parties he was prodigiously struck by the appearance of a new beauty, flaunting amid the coquettes who seemed to be contending for the monarch's notice, and attired in a fantastical French dress, which he immediately pronounced

to be "most peremptory excellent, admirable in the conceit, and faultless in the fashion," although most others would have considered it outré and extravagant. She was tall and handsome, with redundant black locks, and large hazel eyes, which she rolled about unceasingly, as some new object caught her attention; while her manners were those of a volatile girl, unaccustomed to the scene, and delighted with every thing she saw. She exhibited, however, that air of fashion and distinction which Dudley had always admired; and he was the more induced to inquire her name, because he could not help imagining that he had encountered her before, although he knew not where. The reader's astonishment cannot exceed that of Dudley, when he learned that it was no other than his betrothed wife, the phlegmatical and automatical Miss Poyns, of Beckhampton Hall; whom her mother, indeed, perhaps from a better insight into her natural character, had pronounced to be "some deal too gay and giddy," but whom he himself had considered as little better than a human machine, a mere lump of inanimation.

Amid all his methodical arrangements, Sir Eustace Poyns had forgotten to put down the day when death would pay a visit to him at the Hall. In fact, he had always determined to die in the Michaelmas quarter, because his father did so before him; and was rather indignant at the irregularity, than at the nature, of the summons, when he was called upon to depart, just as he was making up his household-book, upon St. Helen's day. Notwithstanding the disorderly nature of the proceeding, however, the grim serjeant carried off his prisoner; and Miss Poyns, as soon as she had laid aside her mourning, was invited to London by her aunt, a designing woman, who knowing her personal attractions, was not without hopes, that, by giving them a proper display, she might advance her own fortune, while she procured the elevation of her niece. There were always a certain number of young female aspirants about the Court, who, knowing that if the King took a fancy to a new wife he would soon manage to get rid of the old one, were candidates for the honour of royalty, however short-lived it might prove. De-

termined that she should have as good a chance as the rest, the aunt drilled and tutored Miss Poyns, in the way that she thought most likely to ensure success, rendering her charms as alluring as possible, by arraying them in a French dress equally extravagant in the fashion and the materials.

She found an apt and willing scholar in her niece, upon whose mind a short residence in the court produced an effect diametrically opposite to that which it had occasioned in Beatrice, because the moral elements upon which it operated were totally different. The latter had brought to the scene of action an acute understanding, a high sense of principle, and a sensitive heart, although they had been overgrown by the weeds of a wrong education, and clouded by the fumes of pride. Circumstances tended to clear away these obstructions; and as her real character developed itself, she retired in disgust from a society, which was alike uncongenial with her feelings and her principles.

From the severe and long-continued restraint in which Miss Poyns had been held, she natu-

rally rebounded into the opposite extreme, as soon as the coercion was removed. She ran wild in the sudden recovery of her liberty, and having but little understanding and less feeling, she was so far from seeing anything to dissatisfy the one, or revolt the other, in the habits and manners of a court, that she considered it the very summit of human felicity, and enjoyed her new life with an unbounded exhilaration of spirits, that was kept up by a recollection of the miserable thraldom and clock-work penance, from which she had escaped.

She constituted in short an excellent woman of fashion, being not less distinguished for her personal charms, and the elegant originality of her French dresses, than the rapid vivacity of her discourse: and, as Dudley sought no higher recommendations in a wife, and saw nothing more objectionable in her than her name of Bridget, he thought he might as well, after all, perform the original contract by making her an offer of his hand, more especially as he had never quarrelled with her handsome portion. She had been now long enough paraded before

the King to convince the aunt that there was no hope of her being exalted to the throne; and, as Dudley stood well in the royal favour, and might, perhaps, be enabled to forward her own views, she consented to their union. They were married accordingly, and, continuing to reside in the Court, were remarkable for the perpetual novelty and richness of their French dresses, the exquisite sapor of their French dishes, their foreign liveries, and the French arrangement of their household, now placed under the sole control of Major-domo Pierre; whose continued practice of singing French ballads, playing tricks, making grimaces, chucking the maids under the chin, and occasionally seizing some fat old surly domestic to whirl him round and round in an involuntary galliard, were held to be levities quite inconsistent with the dignity of his office, although they were too consonant to his own cheerful character to be ever discontinued.

By making it a principle, as he termed it, never to be of his own opinion in politics, religion, or any thing else, when it happened to

differ from that of the King, Sir John Dudley contrived to preserve the favour of his fickle and capricious master, who successively showered down upon him new dignities and emoluments. Sanders, the historian of the Reformation, informs us, that, when Henry grew ancient and diseased, choleric and curious in trifles, he was wont to reward such as ordered his screen or chair to a convenient distance from the fire, with the church of some abbey, or the lead of some sacred edifice; and Fuller asserts, in his "Church History," that he gave a religious house of some value to a woman, for presenting him with a dish of puddings that pleased his palate. By listening to the promptings of his crafty friend Jack Dudley, and consulting the caprices of his master's taste and temper in the minutest trifles, Sir John not only obtained a large share of the plunder thus wantonly lavished, but was created successively Baron Malpas, Viscount Lisle, Earl of Warwick, and Lord High Admiral for life. Continuing the same cautious and winning policy after the King's death, he procured himself to be

made Earl Marshal of England, and subsequently Duke of Northumberland: but when Edward the Sixth died, his old friend Jack Dudley played him a slippery trick, by counselling him to proclaim the Lady Jane Grey, who had married his fourth son, as Queen of England. This project having quickly and miserably failed; he was tried, condemned, and decapitated upon Tower Hill: thus finally following his father's example, which he had so often sworn not to imitate, and being buried with his head *off*, in spite of all his positive resolutions to the contrary.

Plunged in the greatest grief and consternation, as soon as she had learnt Sir Lionel's violent death, Lady Fitzmaurice hastened off to the scene of action, occasionally stopping to weep and ejaculate "Well-a-day! well-a-day! said I not sooth, when I told him, that dead man would be his dole, if he fell from the top of the ladder, that it so liked him to be ever climbing?"

She protected his remains from insult, caused them to be decently interred, and placed a fair monument over them, with this inscription:—

"Here lies the valiant Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, who died in battle"—wherein, by a whole biography of omission, and a little equivocation, this affectionate wife contrived to speak the truth, and yet to record nothing that could disparage her husband. While she was engaged in this pious office, being reproached by a neighbour for showing so much respect to one who was so little worthy of her attachment, "Dear heart! dear heart!" she replied—"what would you have me do? Is not an oath an oath? and did I not swear at the altar to love and honour him, for better and for worse, to love him and cherish him till death should us part? Never did I lose the hope of converting him to the paths of religion and peace, and never, never did I forget that he was once kind, and good, and loving. He was the first man that won my heart, and shall he not keep it to the last? Ah, neighbour, neighbour! if you were in my place, and could see the whole scene before you, as I do at the present moment, when he came wooing to me at the miller's cottage, and we sat in the garden listen-

ing to the splashing of the water-wheel, or the song of the blackbird in the maple-tree, and he told me stories of the wars, and sang me ballads, and gathered me posies, you would be as faithful to the last as I am—ay, and by my troth, as sad and sorrowful too." The tears stole down her cheeks as she spoke; and her companion, though unable to sympathize with her grief, reproached her no more for its indulgence.

When a due time had elapsed after the death of Sir Lionel, the marriage of Cecil and Beatrice was celebrated with great splendour and festivity; the prayers that were put up for their happiness were fervent and universal, and Heaven seemed delighted to make them some compensation for their past trials, by blessing them with an unclouded felicity, of which the world has afforded few examples, and of which they endeavoured to deserve the continuance, by practising, to the utmost of their ability, the dictates of a liberal and enlightened Christianity. Its influence upon their different temperaments was sufficiently marked. In Cecil

it only encouraged the developement of his natural and inherent amiability; to Beatrice it was sometimes necessary as a corrective of those less gentle and patient tendencies, which she had acquired in youth, and which it demanded the joint influence of time and religion completely to eradicate. By these means, however, and the undeviating example of her husband, she at length obtained the great object of her ambition—she became every way worthy of him.

Cecil having succeeded, as a matter of course, to his father's large estates, made it his first care to restore to their ancient possessors, or to their families, all those domains which Sir Lionel had wrenched from them by fraud or violence; while he wrote at the same time to the King, begging leave to give up the extensive grant of the abbey-lands, as it had been obtained by false representation.

"Now, by St. Mary!" cried the King, after reading the letter, "methinks the misbegotten Sir Lionel was right after all, and that this youngster is in sooth a very idiot.

There be knaves enow who have pestered me for such grants; but Master Hungerford is the first simpleton who has offered to restore them."

The Tor House having been the scene of his sufferings and imprisonment, and being rendered undesirable to him as a residence, by a variety of painful recollections, Cecil dismissed all the desperadoes and rufflers of the establishment, and engaging a more orderly household, removed to Farleigh Castle, where Lady Fitzmaurice was installed as the sole manager and superintendent of all the domestic concerns. By her economical arrangements, Cecil was enabled to maintain the splendour of his ancient family, without encroaching upon those extensive charities and that generous hospitality, which formed the delight of his heart. Here the good Lady Fitzmaurice enjoyed a tranquil happiness in her latter days, to which her early life had been a stranger, her serenity being seldom interrupted, except when she visited the tomb of Sir Lionel, upon which occasions she invariably called up to her me-

mory, almost to her senses, the scene of the miller's garden, and remained suffused in tears for the rest of the day.

At Farleigh Castle, Cecil fixed his sole residence; and, as both himself and Beatrice were equally resolved never to revisit London, he sold the old mansion which the family had so long possessed upon the banks of the Thames, not far from the village of Charing. It was purchased by another of the Hungerfords, with whose descendants it remained until the time of Charles the Second, when Sir Edward Hungerford, pulling it down, built several smaller ones, together with a market-house, upon the site. On the north side of the latter edifice, in order to perpetuate the memory of the family, he set up a bust of himself, in a most perplexed and blustering stone periwig. Battered, shattered, and bespattered, the bust still remains; but alas! few ever look up at it, and fewer still bestow a thought upon the worshipful knight whom it represents, and whose name is still borne by the adjoining market and river-stairs.

Judging of others by himself, and, therefore,

anticipating a fierce revenge for the manifold injuries he had inflicted upon Cecil, Dr. Wrench fled into concealment, as soon as he learnt his re-instatement in all his rights. Cecil, however, having discovered his retreat, not only sent him an assurance of his forgiveness, but the promise of a stipend sufficient for his subsistence. It was not long claimed. Disappointed in all his chimerical hopes, and stung to the soul by the recollection of his own credulity, his health gave way; he lingered for some time, and then died in great misery and bitterness of spirit.

Unchanged in nothing but his garb, for he had been forced to lay down his monkish robes, Friar Frank found an asylum in Farleigh Castle, where he retained all his other old habits in their pristine freshness and perfection. He was still the general pacificator of the district; his scraps of Latin were not forgotten; his voice, losing nothing of its deep and mellow tone, was as cheerfully exerted as before; the huge wallet, with its pills, spasmadraps, drops, and cordials for the adult, as well as its comfits, honey-biscuits, saffron-cakes,

and gingerbread for his younger patients, still remained slung to his side; and, as Cecil's munificence kept it well stored in addition with silver-groats and testers, Friar Frank was, if possible, a still greater favourite in the vicinity of Farleigh Castle, than he had been in that of the Tor House.

In dismissing the different characters whom he has introduced to their notice, the author hopes to stand excused with his readers if he bestow a few words upon Cecil's earliest friend and favourite, Snowdrop. Now that his master possessed nobler objects, with whom to divide his sympathies, he no longer enjoyed such an exclusive share of his attention; but the faithful quadruped was still a general *pet*, and did the usual dog's penance for such distinctions, by becoming rather uncomfortably corpulent in figure, and being subject to a wheezing in the lungs whenever he attempted quick motion. His manners altered with his fortunes. Instead of creeping about with the timid and stealthy pace, that formerly marked his furtive visits to Cecil, he seemed to challenge his place in Far-

leigh Castle as the friend of its lord, and though he never for a moment forgot his early respect and affection for his master, he would occasionally snap peevishly at others, who disturbed him on his mat before the fire, or deranged any of the little plans that he had contrived for his personal comfort.

At the final dissolution of the monasteries, an ample scope was afforded to the enlarged philanthropy of Cecil's heart. Thousands of poor monks and nuns, in a state of destitution, were thrown upon a world, with whose ways they were unacquainted, and with whose difficulties they were utterly unable to struggle. Many of these found a temporary or permanent refuge within the walls of Farleigh Castle, some were supported elsewhere by small stipends, some were restored to their friends in distant parts, some were assisted to provide their own maintenance by different employments. "He must be the best Christian," said Cecil, "who is the most tolerant, and extends the greatest kindness to those who differ from him in opinion. Alas! we are all the children of error, and to do

wrong to others, upon the mere presumption that we may be right ourselves, is to depart from the whole spirit of God's law, that we may uphold its letter in some particular instance. The sect, that marks its ascendancy by persecuting those that differ from it, is only imitating the faults of its opponents, instead of setting them a better example. Its adversaries, when they possess the power, will feel themselves justified in retaliating the oppression; and the world will thus for ever move in a circle of error and misery. Such will probably be its course for many years, but a happier and more enlightened æra will at length arise, when England, long the pride and paragon of Europe, in arts and arms, in liberal institutions and intellectual eminence, will blush with shame at the thought of being behind her neighbours upon the single point of religious toleration. Then shall the Protestant stretch forth his hand to the Catholic, and exclaim, 'Brother, brother, come to mine arms, and to my heart, and be restored to the full possession of your civil rights. We are worshippers of the same God, sons of the same soil,

subjects of the same King; let us henceforth live together in the brotherhood and peace of equality; let him be deemed the best Christian who best obeys the commandment, to love his neighbour as himself; let our past errors be forgotten; let us constitute one united family, and thus ensure the happiness of individuals, while we are promoting the strength, the greatness, and the glory of our common country.'

THE END.

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